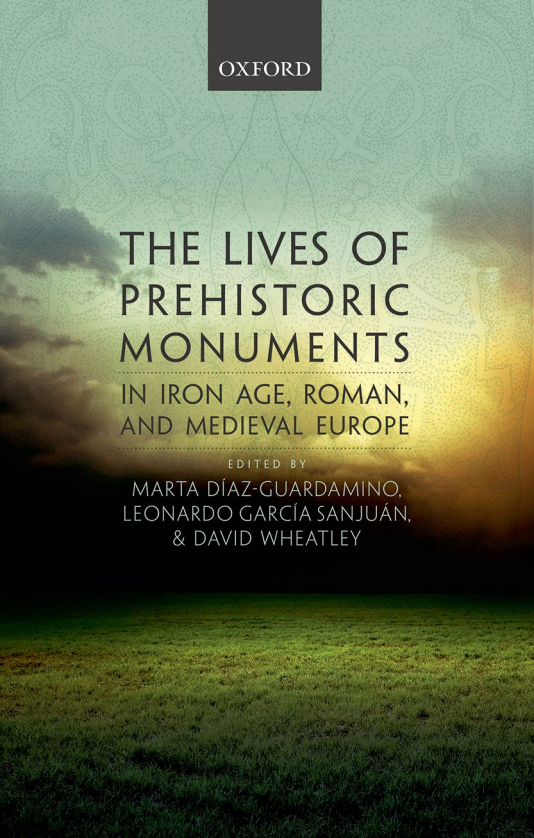


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THE LIVES OF PREHISTORIC MONUMENTS

IN IRON AGE, ROMAN,
AND MEDIEVAL EUROPE

EDITED BY

MARTA DÍAZ-GUARDAMINO,
LEONARDO GARCÍA SANJUÁN,
& DAVID WHEATLEY

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Preface

This book was conceived during our recent research collaboration, centred on a variety of prehistoric monuments in Iberia. These include funerary megalithic monuments, standing stones, stelae, and statue-menhirs found on sites that frequently show persistent patterns of use and reuse well into 'historic' times. The long-term biographies accrued by some of these places in Iberia are redolent of the complex life-histories known for other sites of north-west Europe, where there is a well-known tradition of research on the cultural biographies of monuments, places, and landscapes. During the last four years our research in Iberia has sparked many conversations and interesting discussions about this topic, outlining two aspects that, in our view, deserved further examination. On the one hand, we were particularly interested in the specific roles that monuments themselves, and the large stones they were made of, had played in the crafting of these long-term and complex place-biographies. Ultimately, we were interested in the active roles of prehistoric monuments in social life long after their initial construction or manufacture. On the other hand, comparable patterns of recurrent use are frequently found in different regions of Europe, and we felt that not enough attention had been devoted to this fact hitherto. The occurrence of this phenomenon in areas other than north-west Europe had not been as widely disseminated in the English language, and this fact had prevented their analysis within a comparative framework.

Therefore, we decided to promote the examination of these questions through a book project. We invited a series of researchers—now the contributors to this volume—to present case-studies of different European regions, exemplifying the active roles played by prehistoric monuments in social life during the Iron Age, the Roman, and the Medieval periods. In order to enhance the overall coherence of the resulting edited volume, we organized a meeting for the authors to present and discuss their contributions in advance. This meeting took place in a session held at the 19th Annual Meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists (September 2013, Plzen,

Czech Republic), and helped to ensure the consistency and homogeneity of the book's contents. We are deeply indebted to Professor Richard Bradley for having accepted the task of writing the concluding chapter of the book, in which he discusses ideas underlying the different chapters of the book, and presents an inspiring comparison between the development of monumental architecture and that of oral literature.

We would like to thank the contributors to this volume for their commitment and enthusiastic engagement. Through their hard work they have enriched the overall experience and outcome of this collective endeavour. We are particularly thankful to the anonymous referees, whose helpful commentaries and insights have contributed to greatly enhance the overall quality of the book. Finally, many thanks to Hilary O'Shea, Alexander Johnson, and Annie Rose, from OUP, for their helpful advice, support, and guidance during the editorial process.

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Part I

Introduction

The Lives of Prehistoric Monuments in Iron Age, Roman, and Medieval Europe

An Introduction

*Marta Díaz-Guardamino, Leonardo García Sanjuán,
and David Wheatley*

On 19 June 2014, while the final lines of this book were still being written, Felipe VI was proclaimed King of Spain, giving continuity into the twenty-first century to the Bourbon dynasty, which almost uninterruptedly has occupied the Spanish throne since AD 1714. As a 9-year-old child, on 1 November 1977, Felipe had been installed as Prince of Asturias and heir to the crown of Spain in a ceremony held at the site of Covadonga (Cangas de Onís, Asturias). Covadonga holds a very special position as a symbol of the Kingdom of Spain and is prominent in Spanish nationalist ideology and historiography. After the Arab invasion of Iberia in AD 711 and the subsequent collapse of the Visigoth Kingdom of Toledo, a battle was fought in Covadonga, in which the Christian communities of northern Spain defeated the Arab forces that had taken control of most of Iberia. Emerging as leader from this battle, King Pelayo founded the Christian Kingdom of Asturias. Far less prominent in standard historical accounts is the fact that both Pelayo and his son and successor Favila (AD 737–9) were subsequently buried in two chapels, each of which was built over, or next to, the remains of prehistoric megalithic monuments (i.e. Santa Cruz and Abamia). Both of these sites are very close to Covadonga, itself a place of sacred significance, probably since prehistoric times. As Blas Cortina explains in his contribution

to this volume, Pelayo and Favila had themselves buried in chapels associated with the Neolithic monuments of Santa Cruz and Abamia because these were places vested with 'ancestral power'. Through this association they sought to acquire symbolic capital to legitimate their position within the context of the political instability that followed the collapse of the Kingdom of Toledo and the threat of the Arab invasion. These ancestral monuments were chosen to provide such legitimacy, and when Felipe de Borbón y Grecia was invested as Prince of Asturias in 1977, he too was drawing on the same symbolic roots to nurture his eventual legitimacy as King Felipe VI. That the status and legitimacy of the Spanish monarchy can be so explicitly traced to the Neolithic period is something very few people, including probably Felipe VI himself, suspect.

This book is about prehistoric monuments that—like Abamia, Santa Cruz and Covadonga—accrue complex biographies extending into the most recent past of European and Mediterranean societies. As Chris Scarre (2008, 13) reminds us, the word 'monument' comes from the Latin *monumentum*, which derives from *monere* or 'remind'. Conventionally referred to as 'a statue, building, or other structure erected to commemorate a notable person or event' (*Oxford Dictionary of English*, 3rd edn), the term monument is used by prehistorians to denominate durable, large-sized and conspicuous structures, such as standing and engraved stones or megalithic monuments, which are frequently associated with a variety of coetaneous social practices. Although this is not normally acknowledged explicitly, the use of this denomination carries the assumption that 'prehistoric monuments' were intentionally built by prehistoric communities to commemorate persons, events or places, or a combination of them.

The main aim of this book is to explore the active role that many prehistoric monuments, including rock-art sites, played in social life during the first millennium BC and the first millennium AD, on the basis of a wide thematic, chronological, and geographic coverage. Although this book adopts a broad and inclusive theoretical perspective, from a methodological point of view it draws inspiration from the biographical approach to the study of material culture (e.g. Kopytoff 1986; Gosden and Marshall 1999; Hoskins 2006). This approach has already been applied for some time by Anglo-American archaeologists, proving to be a useful framework within which to consider the active role of monuments and landscapes in social life (Chippindale 1987; Feld and Basso 1996; Bender 1998; Bradley and Williams 1998; Knapp

and Ashmore 1999; Bradley 2000; Holtorf 2000–8; Bradley 2002; Gillings and Pollard 2004; Jones 2007; Rainbird 2008; Rubertone 2008; Parker 2009; Renes et al. 2013). It has, however, been far less widely explored by archaeologists belonging to other academic traditions in the broader context of European and Mediterranean prehistory. Therefore, a key contribution of this book is that authors from different academic traditions take a fresh look at this approach through different case-studies and a range of different theoretical standpoints, enriching our view of the variety of archaeologies that are currently being made in different regions of Europe.

In terms of chronological and geographic coverage, then, this volume transcends traditional period and place constraints. Case-studies include later prehistoric and Roman periods, and follow the trajectories of monuments into the Medieval and even Modern periods of history, from Scandinavia to Tunisia, and from the British Isles to the Balkans. The chronology of each of these broad time periods varies, of course, from region to region and some do not even exist in some areas: this is the case of Ireland, which was beyond the frontiers of the Roman Empire and where no ‘Roman period’ as such has been formally defined. Nonetheless, as Cooney discusses in his contribution to this volume, increasing evidence is emerging for Irish-Roman interaction in Irish territory, not least in the form of possible offerings made at or on megalithic monuments.

This volume is organized in three sections: the first lays the basis of the intellectual problem and has an essentially introductory character. The second presents a series of thirteen contributions that deal with specific case-studies, carefully chosen to provide a broad range of time periods and geographical regions. Most of these contributions deal only or principally with one or two sites, but it is difficult to distinguish single-site from regional approaches because most focus either on particular sites with reference to the wider regional contexts of which they are part, or adopt a more regional approach, looking at particular monuments or places. Different chapters dedicated to case-studies of the same country or region (there are three chapters dealing with French case-studies, and two dealing with Spanish ones) feed each other in the provision of a broader background to evaluate interpretations and to assess the recursive nature of the processes analysed. Despite—or perhaps thanks to—the diversity of perspectives and case-studies, the contributions included in this book cover a series of recurrent

underlying issues and themes, while the last section of the book includes two contributions that are meant to provide a more general background view to the core topic of this volume.

WORDS, NATURE, AND MONUMENTS

The primary theme that runs through the fabric of this volume is, obviously, the role of monuments (as a specific form of material culture) in the long-term unfolding of social life. Among non-literate societies the transmission of information takes place, essentially, through oral traditions and their codification in material culture. Information transmitted through oral traditions becomes unstable and may be forgotten in surprisingly short spans of time, which may range between two and eight generations or, perhaps, between 50 and 200 years (Bradley 2003, 221–2). That, needless to say, does not mean that prehistoric monuments were absent in the oral traditions of ‘historical’ times. In fact, some monuments and places were reused sporadically but persistently over centuries or even millennia. This might suggest that, in some specific cases, oral traditions could have been longer lasting than previously thought, having been constantly reworked through practices that were tightly interwoven with monumental remnants (Pauketat and Alt 2003; Robb 2008; see also Vansina 1985; Echo-Hawk 2000; Jones and Russell 2012). This is exactly what is suggested in the chapters by Williams and Cooney, which place the focus on the interaction between oral tradition on the one hand, and the materiality of monuments and the surrounding landscape on the other.

Williams’s study of the poem *Beowulf* provides an excellent example of how Early Medieval oral literature may have incorporated prehistoric stone monumentality into mainstream world-views, whereas Cooney comments on how, in early Irish literature, there may have been a duality of meanings to the megalithic monuments of Brú na Boyne: home to the supernatural people of the goddess Danu on the one hand and the burial mounds of the ‘pagan’ kings on the other. These two examples of oral literature set in the late first millennium AD, provide interesting evidence towards the exploration of the ideological significance that old monuments may have had at different time periods in prehistory for whose oral traditions we have no record.

Writing, when available, also clearly played an important role as a technology for fixing oral traditions or manipulated versions of them (e.g. in the form of commemorative epigraphs) but the interaction between texts and monuments may be more complex even than this when—as in the case of Avebury, England described by Wheatley—it subsequently becomes reincorporated into the physical fabric of the monument itself.

Information codified in material culture through monument construction or rock-art engraving may be much more durable, especially if the material culture involved is based on stone (Connerton 1989; Rowlands 1993; Meskell 2004). The success of monuments as mnemonic devices depends on a variety of factors including their durability, their prominence (size and visibility) and—in the case of rock art—the degree of iconicity (resemblance to known referents) of the motifs. Unlike writing, monuments and rock-art motifs are not able to fix symbolic (i.e. conventional) meanings, and so provide far more scope for interpretation and manipulation. Stone monuments constitute, above all, arenas in which social practices involving remembrance may be deployed. Conversely, social practices may anchor memories to the physical or spatial properties of monuments and places, reproducing and reformulating these links through time. Monuments may delay the loss of ‘original’ information but, it has been suggested, this loss seems to be an inevitable outcome after some centuries: beyond this, any engagement with prehistoric monuments most probably involved an ‘act of interpretation’ (Bradley 2002, 7–12; 2003, 224).

If resilience, durability and perceptibility are qualities that monuments need to possess in order to play their role in reproducing knowledge over long periods of time, and given the obvious importance of stone architecture for them to accomplish such a role, it should come as no surprise that the period of European prehistory that sets the departure point of this book is the Neolithic, when the earliest stone monuments were built. This is certainly the case for many of the studies presented here (see contributions by Vejby, Laporte et al., Cooney, Wheatley, García Sanjuán and Díaz-Guardamino), although for others the point of departure for the biographies under discussion is the Copper Age or the Bronze Age (see e.g. chapters by Fedele, Babić, Legarra Herrero, García Sanjuán Díaz-Guardamino, and Hvass). A focus on monuments that started their complex biographies in the Neolithic should not, however, be taken as an invitation to decontextualize the Neolithic from its

own temporal dimension. As Salisbury puts it in her contribution, interaction with nature underlies the deep level of continuity embodied in most human enterprises. This is definitely applicable to prehistoric monumentality, as Richard Bradley (2000) showed us: the very earliest stone monuments developed out of already significant natural places. Evidence of the interaction between significant natural places and built stone monumentality is found in the 'biographical fabric' of some of the megaliths discussed in this book, notably in the case of Menga (Spain), which has exceptional connections to a mountain located in its immediate environment that may have been a monument in itself, perhaps even before Menga was built (see chapter by García Sanjuán and Díaz-Guardamino).

Late-prehistoric monuments in Europe lived very diverse lives: some were purposefully destroyed soon after construction, others after they had been in continuous use for generations. Many prehistoric monuments seem to have been eventually forgotten, their settings, architectures, stones, and engravings decayed and blended with a cultural landscape that was already filled with remnants of human activities and still had a pervasive but unnoticed influence in social life. Some monuments, however, were explicitly reincorporated into social life and actively used for different purposes that may be considered either 'orthodox' or 'heterodox' in relation to the 'original' meanings attributed to them. In his discussion of Tara, Newgrange, and Knowth, Cooney highlights the varying ways in which people engaged with monuments. At Tara, the Mound of the Hostages continued to be interpreted until its incorporation in oral and written traditions of the Early Medieval period. The Iron Age and Early Medieval burials at Knowth seem to constitute a deliberate attempt of appropriation by an emerging royal group to gain legitimacy. Finally, Newgrange demonstrates how the site retained significance despite the absence of activity until the fourth century AD, when cult practices associated with the Roman world were deployed. As Newgrange suggests, the absence of direct evidence for social practices at particular times does not imply that a given monument or place was inactive or meaningless at that time. It would be dangerous to read absence-of-evidence as evidence-of-absence, and we must also recognize that some practices may have left very subtle traces that are difficult or impossible to detect archaeologically. This question is well illustrated by the case-study presented by Laporte et al., which shows how Neolithic standing stones may have inspired

the manufacture and placing of Iron Age stelae in French Brittany, despite the scarcity of direct evidence of interaction between Iron Age populations with Neolithic menhirs.

MONUMENTS, POLITICS, AND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

Another major theme running through this book is, of course, the political manipulation of monuments. As George Orwell famously put it in his 1984: 'Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.' As conspicuous materializations of the past, monuments are extremely valuable symbolic resources in the political struggle and so it is not surprising that evidence for the influence of prehistoric monuments in the lives of people during Iron Age, Roman, and Medieval times includes the use that emerging leaders and institutions made of them to achieve political goals.

In her study of Roman Venus and goddess figurines found in megalithic monuments of French Brittany, Vejby notes that, although a general cultural background exists in which this goddess may have been connected with prehistoric fertility cults, it is also interesting that Julius Caesar, conqueror of Gaul in the first century BC, proclaimed himself to be a descendant of Aeneas, founder of the Roman race, who claimed Venus as his mother. Cooney discusses how the numerous Roman objects found around the entrance to Newgrange have been interpreted either as votive offerings deposited by travellers, merchants or pilgrims from Roman Britain to the local deities, or as 'gifts' resulting from military and diplomatic contacts between Irish communities and officers of the Roman Empire. The contexts and aims of the political appropriation of prehistoric sites in ancient times must have been multiple. In an already classic paper, Alcock (1991) showed how the Bronze Age *tholos* tomb of Orcomenos (Beotia, Greece) was transformed into a temple devoted to the imperial cult, revealing just how much accommodation Roman authority was prepared to make with prevailing local ideologies, symbolized in conspicuous monuments. On a related theme, Sanmartí et al. discuss how, in the wake of the collapse of centralized Roman power in North Africa in the fifth century AD, newly emerging ethnic identities and

political structures found an opportunity for legitimization through the revival of Iron Age megalithic monuments.

Similar examples can be found throughout the Middle Ages. We have already mentioned the case discussed by Blas Cortina in which, during the eighth century AD, the dolmens of Abamia and Santa Cruz (Spain) were appropriated by the emerging royal house of Asturias. There are clear similarities with how, as Cooney describes, a royal residence was established at the megalithic complex of Knowth (Ireland) around the beginning of the ninth century and yet, in contrast, Hvass tells us how King Harald Bluetooth appropriated the site of Jelling (Denmark) in the late tenth century by demolishing the previously standing ‘pagan’ monument and raising a large rune-stone to pay tribute to his parents and commemorate his own achievements.

These processes of appropriation and reinterpretation of prehistoric monuments are not restricted to Roman and Medieval periods, but can be readily found in modern and contemporary contexts as well. Weiss-Krejci presents a case set in nineteenth-century Sweden, when King Carl XIV Johan visited the prehistoric burial mounds of Gamla Uppsala in 1834, an event that was captured in a painting kept today at the National Museum of Stockholm. Given that Carl XIV Johan was originally a French person (named Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte) who had been proclaimed king because there were no heirs to the Swedish royal family, this visit must be understood within the context of the new king’s desire to connect himself symbolically with the deep Swedish past, gathering political capital to support his position as (a foreign) king. Another remarkable example of symbolic appropriation of prehistoric monuments in nineteenth-century Europe—in this case with very different political ends—is the ‘monster meeting’ for the independence of Ireland rallied by Irish patriot Daniel O’Connell at the site of Tara in 1843 and which was attended by thousands of people (O’Sullivan 2005).

Whether from the Roman or Medieval periods or from nineteenth-century Europe, the chapters in this volume show how prehistoric monuments have been constantly subjected to active political use precisely *because* they held a special significance in the world-views of coetaneous societies (cf. Parmentier 1987, 11–12; Díaz-Guardamino 2015). Some monuments may have been used by emerging political leaders or institutions to achieve legitimacy while other monuments may have been consistently used by commoners as places of sacred

significance, perhaps in resisting these same institutions and power structures. Whether commoners and aristocrats, insiders or outsiders, Europeans have frequently made prehistoric monuments part of their social landscapes, their daily lives and their political struggles.

Various contributions to this volume testify to the special significance that some prehistoric monuments and places acquired in terms of religious beliefs (which, arguably, are often difficult or impossible to disconnect from the political struggle). Under conditions of Roman 'rule', some prehistoric monuments were interpreted as 'ancestral places' in which Roman or indigenous forms of burial and deposition were performed, sometimes being associated with claims on local identities and traditions (chapters by Sebire, Vejby, García Sanjuán and Díaz-Guardamino, Sanmartí et al.). Vejby, for example, discusses the pattern of intense religious practices that can be documented in prehistoric monuments in the Gulf of Morbihan, French Brittany, during the Roman period and which may be attributed to both Gaulish and Roman populations, possibly as a result of the cultural struggle provoked by the Roman occupation. Sanmartí et al. also discuss how the reuse of one of the most important megalithic tombs of the large El Ksour necropolis (Tunisia) in the transition from the second to third century BC (several centuries after their erection) can be understood as an expression by local peasants of their discrepant identity in the context of the inequalities created by the order imposed by Rome.

The persistence or reuse of prehistoric monuments is also attested in contexts of supposedly prevailing Christianity in various European regions. As Sebire suggests, the only surviving statue-menhirs on Guernsey, Le Câtél menhir and La Gran'mère, appeared in the churchyards of their parish churches, probably as the result of their Christianization. In Iberia, as García Sanjuán and Díaz-Guardamino discuss, the Christianization of rock-art sites is also known and seems to be related to their previous association with 'pagan' beliefs and practices. Fedele, on the other hand, discusses the site of Ossimo Anvòia (Val Camonica, Italian Alps), a site with Copper Age statue-menhirs that were rediscovered, reshaped and restructured according to local 'pagan' ceremonial practices during the fourth century AD, when the region began to be Christianized.

In short, the uses of some prehistoric monuments and other sites, centuries or even millennia after their constitution, exhibit remarkable patterns and commonalities across Europe. Any consideration of

some of these needs to take into account their socio-political contexts which, in Europe, may be a significant part of any explanation and include, for example, Christianization of ‘pagan’ places and ‘appropriation’ by prospective or insecure political leaders. But these socio-political backgrounds do not, by themselves, explain the reasons that guided the selection of particular prehistoric monuments, which may have been linked to the existence of long-lasting local traditions and to the material qualities of the monuments themselves (Bradley 2002, 11–14). The subtleties and complexities of these patterns may throw new light on the study of large-scale social and cultural processes such as those traditionally referred to as ‘Orientalization’, ‘Romanization’ or ‘Christianization’—labels that have been critiqued in the last decade (Hingley 2001; Gosden 2004; Mattingly 2006; Styers 2009; Riva and Vella 2010) although they are still commonplace in many academic traditions.

COROLLARY: TOWARDS SUITABLE CONCEPTS?

Just as the subtle interaction between nature and society renders the age-old debate between ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ pointless, prehistoric monumentality (as seen through the eyes of the biographical approach) makes the divide between prehistory and history look increasingly like an unbearably old-fashioned and tediously ineffectual intellectual artifice. Several cases described and explained throughout this volume, including Newgrange, Knowth, and Tara in Ireland, Covadonga and Menga in Spain, Avebury in England, Val Camonica in Italy or Jelling in Denmark, show that, when it comes to the fine detail of human social interaction, the disciplinary boundaries that separate prehistory and history must not be allowed to become a barrier to understanding. It could well be said that the biographical approach to places and landscapes like those studied in this book has become a stepping stone to a past that is free from such Victorian concepts, themselves founded on the basis of extreme Eurocentrism, in which ‘illiterate’ prehistory was seen as the night that preceded the dawn of ‘literate’ civilization.

Several chapters in this book demonstrate the need for new conceptual categories, for a new language, to explain a phenomenon that prehistoric archaeology has only recently begun to

understand: that of sites and landscapes with deep, long-term biographies. Current archaeological thinking needs to develop the conceptual toolbox necessary to deal with the complex patterns of frequentation, transformation, abandonment or reuse over very long timescales that are documented throughout Europe and the Mediterranean. Alistair Whittle and others have rightly drawn attention to the significance of both the timing and tempo of change during prehistory (Whittle et al. 2008), but a proper understanding of the different tempos in which such monuments were used over both long and short timescales demands new epistemological awareness and finer conceptual categories, as well as the support of high-resolution dating evidence such as the radiocarbon chronologies presented in this volume by Fedele as part of his study of the monoliths of Ossimo Anvòia (Val Camonica, Italy).

Discussing Avebury, Wheatley suggests that while monuments are built with the intention of projecting forward particular world-views, inviting (or constraining) future generations to act in specific ways, in practice the physical traces of the monuments become ‘mementos’ that have to be reinterpreted and resituated time and again within a contemporary understanding of the world. In his discussion of the archaeological implications of *Beowulf*, Williams uses the concept of ‘mnemonics’ to highlight how the dragon’s fantastic ‘mound’ acted as a time-mark linking various biographical stages from its building to the poet’s present. In his discussion of the long biographies of the great Irish megaliths of Mound of the Hostages, Newgrange and Knowth, Cooney uses the notion of ‘permanency’ to highlight, following Bradley (1998, 66), that one of the main purposes of such grandiose monuments was to become permanent ‘homes’ for the ancestors. As Cooney points out, archaeologists have dealt with the ‘permanency’—understood in terms of endurance or durability rather than motionlessness (see also Díaz-Guardamino 2015)—of monuments in different ways. Some have used the concept of ‘afterlife’ to denote the reuse and reinterpretation of monuments after periods of abandonment (Bradley 1993). Others, in contrast, have resorted to the concept of ‘life-histories’ of monuments to emphasize the active role of their material remains in the ways they were reused and reinterpreted (Holtorf 1998, in Cooney this volume). Although interesting, in our view, the notion of afterlife is problematic because it implies that monuments have a specific (primary and definitive) ‘life’ against which we can define ‘before’ and ‘after’ (secondary) lives.

For many monuments (as Wheatley observes in relation to Avebury) it is hard to justify selecting a single period or moment in this way and in the title of this book we have chosen to use the term 'lives' to convey the simpler notion of complex biographies or 'life-histories' without such 'befores' and 'afters'. Weiss-Krejci, on the other hand, emphasizes the notion of 'appropriation' of the past: in the political struggle, monuments are owned or contested by people who want to make statements about power.

Concepts such as 'memory', 'memento', 'mnemonics', 'permanency', 'afterlife', 'life-history', and 'appropriation' are thus used or discussed by various contributors to this book in attempts to find a suitable conceptual toolbox. Some of these concepts have already been widely debated within prehistoric archaeology (e.g. Rowlands 1993; Holtorf 1996; Edmonds 1999; Van Dyke and Alcock 2003; Jones 2007; Lillios 2008, Mills and Walker 2008; Lillios and Tsamis 2010; Jones and Russell 2012), but one challenge ahead may be to extend this discussion to the many other academic constituencies—both geographic and disciplinary—that are engaged in the scientific debates surrounding the continuity and active role of prehistoric monuments in the social life of Ancient and Medieval Europe.

By way of conclusion, this book underlines the relevance of both materiality (in general) and monumentality (as a particular form of materiality) in the long-term unfolding of social life. Monuments and places vividly encapsulate the material and spatial dimensions of social life, as well as its cultural and historical depth. Monuments are evidently involved in the crafting and reproduction of long-lasting knowledge (such as memories and traditions) and in the recreation of enduring links between people and places. In short, they are part of the landscapes in which people are socialized (Gosden and Head 1994). Therefore, this book invites the reader to reconsider the disciplinary boundaries between prehistory and history while promoting the role of Archaeology as a bridging discipline. The chapters in this book illustrate, in a clear and straightforward way, that prehistoric monuments were pervasive and active features in the early social history of Europe. This, in turn, highlights the need to reconsider linear concepts of time, which, among others, underlie the traditional divide between prehistory and history. Prehistoric monuments not only hint at people, societies and histories that are not recorded in written accounts, but also reveal the genealogical nature of social life and people's engagement in the world, and the seminal role of monuments in these processes.

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Before the Standing Stones

From Land Forms to Religious Attitudes and Monumentality

Joyce E. Salisbury

INTRODUCTION

Any study of great prehistoric monuments from standing stones to pyramids involves exploring people's spiritual beliefs. There had to be some strong sense of awe to motivate people to do the kind of extraordinary work to erect such monuments, and in the ancient world, religion served as the greatest motivator. There are many ways to study religion, and each academic discipline uses its own methods, which in turn shape its conclusions. Anthropologists compare different religions to see how different cultures express their beliefs; sociologists look at the functions religions serve to maintain a social cohesiveness. Psychologists of religion might look at the way religious feelings are manifest in individuals, and theologians try to explore deep truths about the nature of God. All these approaches reveal some truths about this complex phenomenon we call religion and the results often seem like those of the proverbial blind men describing parts of an elephant while missing the glory of the whole. I, too, will focus on one small part of the religious experience—the feeling that lies at the heart of those who have felt the spiritual, and while there have been many disciplines that have studied this religious experience, from psychology to philosophy to sociology, my approach is historical. I will try to

explore the nature of people's religious expression over time, as they change and as they stay the same.

What is this religious feeling? As we might expect, there are many different interpretations and analyses of the nature of the religious experience. It may mean the capacity of feeling at one with something larger than oneself, which is the definition of 'mysticism'. It may mean a belief in—a faith in—a supernatural being. For the purposes of this chapter, however, I will simply accept the experience as a capacity humans have to feel awe and reverence (Bellah 2011). This enduring sense of awe—what has been famously called the idea of the holy (Otto 1950)—lies somewhere at the heart of all subsequent religious impulses. This perspective goes further in that it assumes that there is a generalized religious experience that is expressed differently in different religious traditions (Lindbeck 1984). Therefore, to study long-standing religious feelings, it is necessary to look beneath the surface manifestations of religion—the gods and the rituals—to try to glimpse a feeling of awe.

Beyond this exploration of a general religious feeling, trying to explore long-standing religious beliefs requires a particular approach to the sources of the past. In general, historians study two major issues as we look at the passage of time: change and continuity. The history of change is easy both to see and document, as political winds shift, wars break out, disasters strike. Continuity is harder to trace since it requires a much longer view of the past, with less continuous evidence. Fernand Braudel, the great historian of the 1950s and beyond, drew our attention to the almost timeless history of continuities that lie beneath the rapid changes that catch our historical attention. He wrote about 'a history in which all change is slow, a history of constant repetition, ever-recurring cycles' (Braudel 1966, 20).

This deep level of continuity that underlies human enterprise lies in two principal areas. First is human interaction with nature. People across time and space who navigate the seas have to accommodate the tides, storms, and seasons, and people who inhabit the land consider weather, water, and soil. These facts allow us to consider environmental continuities as we trace history. More difficult—and for this reason more interesting to me—are the continuities within the human mind. We change many of our ideas slowly and reluctantly, but these mental changes also have their own varying rhythm. Most of us are quick to adopt new technologies that we find useful and new entertainment that we find amusing. However, we are slow to change deeply held ideas that we believe have kept us safe from harm or even from anxiety.

This category of ideas—which we call religion, or superstition, depending on our own particular ideas—is the subject of this chapter.

THE STUDY OF PERSISTENT BELIEFS

Early settlers of Europe (and the world for that matter) brought with them this sense of awe for the supernatural, wherever they happened to locate it, and as I shall show, the critical matter for this long view of human religions is the land itself. We can follow people's religious awe as we trace the remnants of the locations—the actual places—that formed the basis of their worship. As we do so, we will see that the religious beliefs of the Early Neolithic settlers, who erected the great standing stones, did not rise with the stones. Instead, before their engineering feats, they venerated the world around them, the mountains, the caves, the trees, and the springs. Professor Bradley's work describing the way Neolithic monuments built upon earlier veneration of natural places convincingly details this continuity of worship (Bradley 2000). Furthermore, these deeply held religious sensibilities moved into the future, into Christian worship. As Christian leaders discovered, anyone who wants to introduce new ideas into a culture must accommodate people's long-held beliefs in some way, including the 'holiness' of the environment that surrounds them whether it's a standing stone or a holy mountain.

Before I look at the particular environmental features that early Europeans venerated, I should say a few words about the methods of such a study of long continuity of thought. Fernand Braudel pioneered the study of history of what he called the *longue durée* (Braudel 1980), and the Annales School of historians have developed the techniques of such research, which I draw upon here. At the simplest level, researchers can bracket a continuation of ideas. That is, if people believed the same things in two separate periods of time, we might assume a similar belief in the central, though undocumented period. This kind of analysis must be done carefully because we cannot know exactly the nature of the belief at any given time. For an example that is a bit reminiscent of veneration of standing stones, we might consider Egyptian obelisks. The ancient Egyptians erected them probably as a way to join heaven and earth, as part of a sun worship. Millennia later, the Romans moved many of these great

monuments to Rome and other places in the empire and re-erected them. Romans apparently simply treated them as trophies of their conquest of Egypt, so they valued them for their visible statements of power rather than as elements of sun worship. A millennium later, Christians gave new meaning to the obelisks, moving them again to serve a Christian city. The great obelisk in Saint Peter's square—the 'witness' obelisk—stood where the first martyrs died, and other obelisks guide pilgrims into the Christian city. Therefore, what can we say about the literally long-standing columns? Perhaps we can conclude nothing more than that we must be cautious about drawing conclusions regarding people's attachments to ancient monuments. Richard Bradley notes this same problem with regard to how people remember and reuse monuments, writing 'there was a certain tension between the enduring character of these buildings and the changing ways in which they were actually used' (Bradley 2003, 223). However, this does not mean that we are unable to draw conclusions about the use of ancient artefacts and monuments.

Archaeologists and anthropologists offer a second technique that is more fruitful in unearthing ancient ideas. David Lewis-Williams, in his study of Upper Palaeolithic cave paintings argues that scholars must use 'cable-like arguments' that weave together various kinds of evidence so that where there are gaps, the argument does not fall apart, but holds together based on other evidence woven within (Lewis-Williams 2002). Alison Wylie encourages a rich theoretical framework and a careful awareness of our cultural assumptions to allow archaeologists to reconstruct the past through an analysis of fragmentary data (Wylie 1989). Applying these methods to our obelisk problem, we can add related information about Roman attitudes toward power and trophies in general to form a picture that will show that in the case of obelisk veneration we do not have a continuity of religious ideas, but the addition of changing ideas onto a fixed object—the obelisk. With these methodological cautions in place, we can turn to some analysis of the persistence of religious ideas in Europe before the standing stones.

EARLY RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

When did people's religious sensibilities emerge? Of course, there is no way to be certain, but all the evidence suggests that at some point,

our human large brains and creative imaginations brought the recognition that we are a small part of something much larger than ourselves. In fact, Lewis-Williams suggests that a defining characteristic of *Homo sapiens*, is the capacity to remember dreams and visions achieved in altered states. He argues convincingly that the cave paintings from the Upper Palaeolithic represent recalled visionary experiences that people believed linked them to spiritual realms (Lewis-Williams 2002). This capacity to imagine—and believe in—a spiritual world defines who we are and becomes a central feature of human life. In the Upper Palaeolithic, people expressed their awe in deep caves but also in burial rituals and body adornment (Lewis-Williams 2002). Quite likely, they also expressed their spiritual awe in other ways and places that have not endured, like trees or groves or totems. As we approach the historical era, we can trace a larger pattern of enduring beliefs that were first connected to the land where people settled. Deep jungles yield one kind of religious practice, while expansive deserts, where the night sky is so vividly seen, yield another. In most of the Mediterranean basin, settlement patterns followed rivers and foothills, and these were the landscapes that shaped people's consciousness, and preserved ancient reverence for mountains and caves.

Regardless of the spaces involved, the heart of all religious rituals from Palaeolithic to modern is the desire to bring the two worlds—earthly and spiritual—together. Ancient cave painters not only wanted to remember their visions, they longed for ways and spaces to preserve their connection to the spiritual. This desire has a long history readily traced from the caves to Christian celebrations of an incarnate God who chose to breach the distance between human and divine. During the early centuries of Christian expansion, texts reveal a growing concern with the seeming distance between the 'celestial world and the territorial one' (Dodds 1985, 7), and Christian theology slowly began to address that need. However, long before the Christian centuries, humans looked for other ways to join the heavens with the earth, and they first looked to tall mountains to accomplish this.

The earliest settlers of Europe skirted ever-present mountains. Except for the desert from Tunisia to Egypt, the Mediterranean is surrounded by significant mountain ranges, including the high Alps, the Pyrenees, the Apennines down Italy, the Caucasus, the Anatolian mountains in Turkey, the Atlas mountains in North Africa and Spanish ranges. The dominance of mountains extends to the north,

through the British Isles and the Scandinavian countries. This meant that travellers had to find passes through the peaks, and settlers lived constantly in the shadow of the heights.

SACRED MOUNTAINS

The earliest settlement patterns placed people in the foothills or the low valleys between the peaks, but what did they think of the mountains themselves? Mountains traditionally seemed to be the land of the gods (or a deity itself) in many, if not all, parts of the world. The Sherpas called Everest the 'Goddess Mother of the Land', forbidden until the Modern Age. The Inca left offerings and their dead on sacred peaks; the Japanese and Indians have their own holy mountains. In Europe, Mount Olympus was home to the Greek deities; Vulcan lived in Mount Etna, and Mount Ida was the home of a goddess. In northern Europe, ancient Celts believed that mountain heights raised worshippers to the sky-god's space (Green 1993), once again marking the human desire to find places where the human and the divine can mingle. These are only a few of the examples that could be multiplied, but it demonstrates at the very least that mountains were seen as holy spaces (Bernbaum 1998).

The holiness of mountains seems to be based on the fact that the heights themselves linked earth to heaven. Balkan peoples traditionally believed that the earth and sky were joined by hooks reaching out from four cosmic mountains lying at the four corners of the world (Stoianovich 1967), and while other myths are not this specific, they serve to reinforce the point. If people wanted to get closer to heaven, they would climb a mountain. This was true even in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, when Moses climbed Mount Sinai and received the Ten Commandments. The Gospel of Matthew tells of Jesus' transformation when he climbed a 'high mountain' with the apostles Peter and James. On the mountain, Jesus' 'face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light'. Jesus encountered Moses and Elijah on the mountain, and his disciples were filled with awe at his transformation.¹ As these examples show, there is a long-standing

¹ *The Bible, Revised Standard Version*, Matt. 17: 2–6.

tradition of heights that are close to the heavens as a space where the divine and the human could become closer.

As we move forward to historical periods, the Christian Church had to confront these age-old venerations as it tried to persuade mountain people to shift their allegiance from mountain spirits to a transcendent God. Throughout the 'pagan' period the faithful had marked many heights with symbols of the holiness that seemed to reside there, and these symbols became idols—deities of the mountaintops. Professor Bradley has detailed many instances of such appropriation from Crete, where natural places attracted altars and monuments that marked the sites as holy (Bradley 2000), and the pattern is repeated and observable in many regions of the Mediterranean.

The Romans most clearly articulated the relationship between spaces and the deities that inhabited them. The second-century pious 'pagan' Celsus explained: 'From the beginning of the world, different parts of the earth were allotted to different guardians [...] For this reason, it is impious to abandon the customs which have existed in each locality from the beginning' (Hoffmann 1987, 87). Celsus criticized Christians for abandoning this respect for the deities of the land, equating it with using someone's apartment and paying no rent (Hoffmann 1987). This expressed the reality that Christian leaders confronted when they tried to separate people from their allegiance to spaces that had long seemed to offer access to the spiritual realm.

Least effectively, church leaders tried to ban 'idolatry', which included not only carved idols, but also veneration of natural spaces, for frequently an idol simply marked a sacred space and represented the spirit that dominated there (Flint 1991). It is no surprise that such idolatry was banned repeatedly by churchmen meeting in council, but the repeated prohibitions simply indicate how futile the bans were. For example, the Council at Elvira in Spain banned idolatry as early as AD 306 but more than two centuries later, in 589, the Third Council of Toledo observed that the 'sacrilege of idolatry is firmly implanted throughout almost the whole of Spain' (Salisbury 1985, 227). Through the seventh century Spanish councils revived legislation against worshipping fountains, trees, and stones. Were these stones large standing stones or small totemic ones? The legislation does not say but it probably does not matter; the significance was the continuation of a veneration of spiritual objects. Prohibition was not the answer; the Church soon learned to replace 'pagan' worship with a Christian one.

Texts written by Christians from the fourth through the seventh centuries AD reveal a subtle transformation of mountain veneration into Christian purpose. Holy men (and sometimes women) retreated to the tops of mountains to claim the space for Christianity. For example, one Emilian retired to a mountain in Spain, and his first task was to battle against the ‘ancient scoundrel’ who inhabited these holy heights (Lynch 1938, 122). After his victory, he was the acknowledged new power on the mountain, and the heights were claimed for Christian worship. This pattern was repeated throughout the Mediterranean world as hermits placed themselves on the tops of mountains to usurp the power of the old mountain gods (Brown 1971).

Hermits were followed by monastic communities in settling on mountain tops but the principle remained the same. Slowly spaces that had previously belonged to ‘pagan’ spirits were inhabited by Christian holy people. Individual monks and nuns did not represent the same level of holiness as an ancient god, but the collective holiness represented by a monastery with relics of saints that purportedly retained supernatural power satisfied the deep need to have spaces where the human and the divine could meet.

The clearest articulation of the necessity slowly to substitute worship came in a letter from Pope Gregory sent to Britain in about AD 601. Gregory wrote that ‘the temples of the idols ought not to be destroyed; but let the idols that are in them be destroyed; let water be consecrated and sprinkled in the said temples, let altars be erected, and relics placed there’. Not only was this a practical way to use ‘temples that are well built’ but Gregory articulated a deeper truth: one that linked people with the land itself they found sacred. The pope wrote that people might be led to the true God if they can ‘more freely resort to the places to which they have been accustomed’ (Sellar 1907). Pope Gregory was right; people might give up the idols—the symbols of holiness—but they were less willing to give up the places of holiness. These needed to be claimed for Christian worship in creative ways.

As Pope Gregory noted, Christian holy people who took to the heights and claimed them for Christian worship did not change a fundamental relationship between the mountain tops and the local residents. People continued to venerate a power on the mountain and trust that power—whether it was in the form of a holy man or an old god—to bring blessings from heaven to earth, that is, for the mountain to serve as mediator between the transcendent and the human.

Christianity had promised a dramatic change in the geography of the holy: a transcendent God through His incarnate Son and the Holy Spirit could join heaven and earth. However, through the Middle Ages, most people put their trust in a closer, more familiar mediator—a holy person or sacred relics in a shrine on a mountain top.

This mountain veneration is so enduring that some scholars trace its persistence well into the Modern Age. The famous scholar of the Balkans, Traian Stoianovich, even argued that well into the nineteenth or twentieth centuries AD, Balkan people continued to be a ‘product of Neolithic cultures, bound religiously, psychologically, and economically to the soil and space around [them]’ (Stoianovich 1967, 44). Obviously, much had changed in the Balkans between the Neolithic and the Modern Age, but this perspective focuses on that which persisted, and a deep reverence for the land and the mountain tops that dominated it formed a core of that persistence.

This kind of age-old veneration led to a fascinating confrontation between the old and the new in Iceland in 2009, when road-building workers came to a halt when trying to move a particular stone. A medium told the workers that ‘elves’ (or some other supernatural spirit) no longer lived in the stone but wanted it moved in a dignified fashion. Iceland’s Road Authority accommodated the request and carefully moved the stone before returning to work on the road (Hilzoy 2009). Probably the lesson to be drawn from this incident is not that there is a lingering ‘paganism’ in a land converted to Christianity over 1,000 years before, but that there continues to be a very human recognition that large structures in the land itself contain aspects that seem sacred.

SACRED CAVES AND SUPERNATURAL WATERS

Christianity also had to appropriate other elements of the landscape that had long been considered sacred. Just as Neolithic people moved deeply into caves to seek doorways into the spiritual world (Bergsvik and Skeates 2012), early Christians, too, looked to openings into the mountains to find a deep spirituality, and from the historical period, the most sacred caves were those that contained water. Water that seemed miraculously to flow from underground passages through the rocks of a mountain seemed to represent a source of supernatural

power. The shrines to the Virgin Mary at Ephesus, Turkey, Covadonga, Spain, and Lourdes, France are only a few of the most famous and enduring examples of locations where Christians gather near fountains emerging from rocks.

An influential sermon preached by Martin of Braga in Iberia around AD 570 (and quickly translated into many languages, including Old Norse as far away as Iceland) reprimanded country people for clinging to their old superstitious idolatry. He included a warning against venerating springs (i.e. fountains) in his list of prohibited activities: 'For what is burning candles by [...] the fountains [...] if not the worship of the devil' (Barlow 1969, 81). Of course, direct prohibitions seldom stop anything, and the Church had to address fountain worship in creative ways.

Just as is the case with mountain veneration, not surprisingly, the worship of sources of water was not limited to Europe, but exists worldwide. For example, the ancient Maya in Central America and Mexico venerated deep wells—*cenotes*—and brought offerings to the spirits guarding these waters. Even today, Christians sometimes burn candles at the edge of these deep and beautiful sources of water. Sacred waters are found in cultures throughout Asia, Africa, and traditional societies in other parts of the world, and it is possible to trace continued veneration of flowing waters through modern worship in many religions.

Ancient Celtic religion had a rich mythology of the sacred attached to many sources of water. Sacred wells joined underground springs as intermediaries between earth and the sacred underworld, just as Palaeolithic people saw deep caves as doorways to the spiritual underworld. Celtic religion linked springs with curative properties bringing blessings of health and well-being to the faithful who worshipped there (Green 1993, 53). Secular visitors to modern springs find health benefits from these waters that had been found holy for time before memory.

Just as Pope Gregory had observed with idols and mountain shrines, sacred springs also needed special treatment if people were to change their old allegiances. We can trace significant elements of transfer of worship in the ritual practices that are preserved in old Christian liturgies.

Early Christian liturgies detail a sequence of prayers and practices that were often repeated to try to claim sacred springs for Christian use. First, the Christian Church acknowledged a supernatural presence in

the living waters of a fountain, and began with a cleansing. A priest chanted with solemnity: 'Be exorcised, creature of water, in the name of the Lord God of Hosts [...] and diabolical apparition depart' (Salisbury 1985, 237). Of course, removing the spirit of a fountain was no more satisfying than a prohibition of worship to those who had seen a miraculous presence in the waters. The Church responded by adding complex prayers to bless the waters, essentially replacing the old spirit that had been removed with the new spirit of Christ, who inhabited and renewed the water making it as spiritually efficacious as it had been before. Now, when residents brought candles and other offerings to leave at the edge of a spring, they satisfied a Christian requirement of worship and an older need to acknowledge the miraculous nature of water that springs from rock.

CONCLUSIONS

By tracing a continued veneration for visible features of the land like mountain peaks, deep caves and living waters springing from deep rock, historians can begin to see the difference between veneration attached to timeless land forms from attachment to human-made structures like obelisks and standing stones. Constructed features may take on shifting meanings because they are merely symbols for more elemental forms of religious expression. For the Egyptians, obelisks served to join the earth to the sky, just as mountains did. For the ancient Balkan people, obelisks represented symbolic trees that possessed a life force (Stoianovich 1967). Thus, the more abstract a figure of veneration might be, the easier it was to shift meanings, making such abstract symbols unreliable as ways to trace deep religious sensibilities. The further we move from symbols to deep structures of the land itself, the closer we can come to ancient veneration.

What can we learn from this incredibly broad view of religious attachments that spans tens of thousands of years of human experience extending from the Upper Palaeolithic to modern days? A basic conclusion that lies at the heart of all studies of the history of religion seems to be that human beings possess an awareness of a spiritual world, or at least a world that lies beyond the immediacy of this life and this moment. Whether the origin of this spiritual awareness comes as a gift from a god, or an accidental 'God gene' (Hamer

2005), or an evolution in early humans that led us to remember our dreams, the spiritual awareness has led to a deep longing for a connection to the divine. This longing has taken many forms over the millennia of human existence. Whether we crawl into deep caves, as our ancestors did to try to paint visions of a glimpsed spiritual world, or whether we focus our eyes upwards at stars circling in the heavens that represented a world we tried to touch, the inclination is the same. We want to bring the two worlds we inhabit—earthly and spiritual—together. It is this deep desire that led early ancestors to look to mountains, caves, rocks, water, trees, and other natural elements to try to access the divine.

Christianity offered an incarnate God to bridge the seeming deep gap between the human and the divine, but in the early years of the spread of the message of Christianity, people were afraid to give up the familiar connections between the worlds. As people slowly converted to Christianity, holy men and women served as mediators between the old religious spaces and the new, and prayers replaced ‘pagan’ spirits with Christian ones. Indeed, we humans are careful and conservative in our recognition of the holy and our longing for the divine. The great prehistoric monuments of the past, whether the prehistoric caves of Lascaux or the standing stones of Europe, are vivid, visible reminders of people’s persistent desire to locate and mark the borders where spiritual worlds joined the land of the living. As such, all these monuments offer the living a glimpse into the spiritual longing of the past.

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Part II

Case-Studies

Kings' Jelling

Monuments with Outstanding Biographies in the Heart of Denmark

Steen Hvass

INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH HISTORY OF THE SITE

On 16 April AD 2000 the 60th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark was celebrated. To mark this particular day seventeen new tapestries were placed in Christiansborg Palace, in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark. The tapestries depict the history of the Danish monarchy throughout 1,000 years. In the middle of the banqueting hall hangs the first and one of the largest tapestries about the Viking period. Here the history of King Gorm's lineage begins: King Gorm the Old, his Queen Thyre, their son Harald Bluetooth, his son Svein, and Svein's son Canute the Great, who ended up ruling over the whole of Denmark and England. Above the heads of the kings, 'paganism' fights against Christianity (Hornum 2000, 85).

The most stately and noble monument in the history of Denmark are the Jelling Monuments (Figure 3.1). The Jelling Monuments stand as a key site in the archaeological and historical explanation of the political and religious transformations of the Scandinavian world at the end of the Viking Period. The site consists of the two largest burial mounds in Denmark, two runic stones dating from the Viking Period, and the church situated between the burial mounds. Since 2005, new

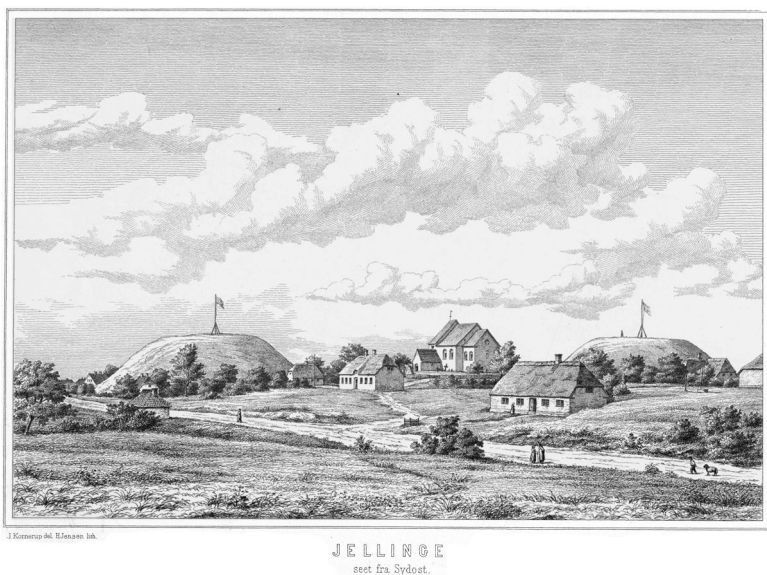


Figure 3.1. The Jelling monuments in AD 1861. After Kornerup 1875, pl. 1.

excavations have expanded the monument area with the discovery of a huge stone setting depicting the outline of a ship measuring almost 360 metres in length, and a four-sided wooden palisade, which once encircled an area of approximately 12.5 hectares. The Northern Mound with a burial chamber is the centre for both the stone-ship and the entire expanse of the newly discovered palisade.

Archaeological investigations in Jelling began as early as AD 1586, when Caspar Markdanner, King Frederik II's lord lieutenant at Koldinghus Castle, raised one of the two rune-stones known at the site to an upright position so that its honour and dignity would be restored. In 1591 the lord lieutenant had an etching made of the entire site, and in 1643 Ole Worm drew up the first description of the monuments.

In 1704 the first excavations were carried out in the North Mound at the initiative of King Frederik IV. In 1820 local peasants found a burial chamber in the North Mound and the following year excavations funded by King Frederik VI took place (Magnusen and Thomsen 1827). The archaeologically interested monarch, King Frederik VII, conducted extensive investigations in 1861 (Kornerup 1875).

The National Museum of Denmark made extensive excavations in both burial mounds in 1941 and 1942 (Dyggve 1942, 65; 1948, 190).

This project became the largest of its type in Scandinavia. In 1947–8 and in 1951 excavations took place in the church itself (Dyggve 1955, 221), and in 1965 large surface excavations were carried out around the North Mound in order to examine various theories about two rows of large monoliths found at the site (Glob 1970, 97). During the period 1976–9 Jelling became the object of renewed interest after subsequent excavations inside the church itself, where a burial chamber and traces of more wooden houses were uncovered (Krogh 1983, 194). Every decade from 1940 and up until 1980 The National Museum of Denmark carried out a series of excavations. The excavations were concentrated exclusively around the church and the burial mounds.

The excavations from 1941 to 1979 have triggered new interpretations and debate. Concerning the two rows of large stones under the South Mound, found in 1941, the various theories can be seen on Figure 3.2, from 1942 (Dyggve 1942, 65), 1968 (Glob 1970, 97), and 1970 (Andersen 1970, 26). In the proposal from 1970 the stone rows in the north ended by the edge of the Bronze Age barrow, found under the North Mound in 1942. In 2009 it has been documented that there was no Bronze Age barrow under the North Mound (Andersen et al. 2010, 9).

From 1986 Vejle Museum subsequently carried out preliminary archaeological surveys related to all impending civil engineering projects to be made in Jelling, with a focus on unearthing settlements from the Iron Age and the Viking Period. The upshot is that a picture can be drawn—on the ground area south of the present town of Jelling—of one ongoing settlement that has continuously evolved

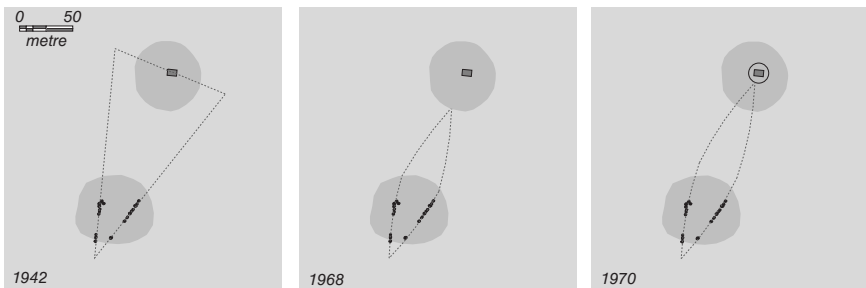


Figure 3.2. Various theories about the two rows of large stones under the South Mound, found in 1941. Drawing by Niels-Chr. Clemmesen. © Steen Hvass.

since around the time of the birth of Christ all the way up to the period contemporaneous with the monuments in Jelling (Hvass 1998, 161; Christiansen 1999, 181).

First, in 2006, a small excavation was made on the ground area north of the mounds. It brought to light a group of large stones, ranging up to 2 metres in length, having the same size and forms as some of the stones that were found in 1941 underneath the South Mound. But there were more surprises in store. Discovered here, also, were the pits for a number of upright posts for a house with a form and construction familiar from the Viking Period's ring fortresses in Denmark with the name Trelleborg houses. But not only this, a very solid post-constructed palisade fence that could be traced for quite a stretch in a straight line was also found.

The excavations in 2006–13 opened up a whole new chapter in the history of Jelling-related scholarship. With a grant from an important foundation in Denmark, The National Museum of Denmark (in collaboration with Vejle Museum and Århus University) was able to launch a major Jelling Project from 2008. The results of the latest round of excavations in Jelling have, so far, spelled out a veritable archaeological breakthrough in the exploration of this site.

Today, the perception of the layout's history and function is fundamentally different from what it was just a few years ago (Hvass 2000). The monuments, with the burial mounds, the ship-setting and the rhombus-formed enclosure cover an area of 12.5 hectares, and each of the four sides is 360 metres long (Hvass 2011b; Holst et al. 2012, 474).

From the mid tenth century we know of a continuous succession of kings, beginning with Gorm the Old. The monuments in Jelling appear to fall within the historically assumed reigns of King Gorm the Old, who died around AD 958, and Harald Bluetooth, who lived around 958–87.

THE 'PAGAN' MONUMENT (MID TENTH CENTURY AD)

The first monument in Jelling was a 'pagan' monument that included the burial chamber in the North Mound, the stone-ship, the small rune-stone of King Gorm and possibly the burial chamber found in

the church. This first monument is dated to the first half of the tenth century and linked to the reign of King Gorm the Old (Figure 3.3).

The burial chamber found in the centre of the large ship-setting was constructed directly on the ground level. Spanning across this burial chamber, perhaps a smaller mound was constructed. This was the later North Mound in the site as we know it today. The burial chamber was *c.* 6.75 metres long, 2.60 metres wide and 1.45 metres high, erected as a stave building of oak timber. Dendrochronological studies of wood preserved from the burial chamber suggest that the funeral for this eminent individual was held sometime during the winter season of AD 958–9.

The found portion of grave goods displayed an outstanding calibre of equipment, with several fragments of different furniture items. In

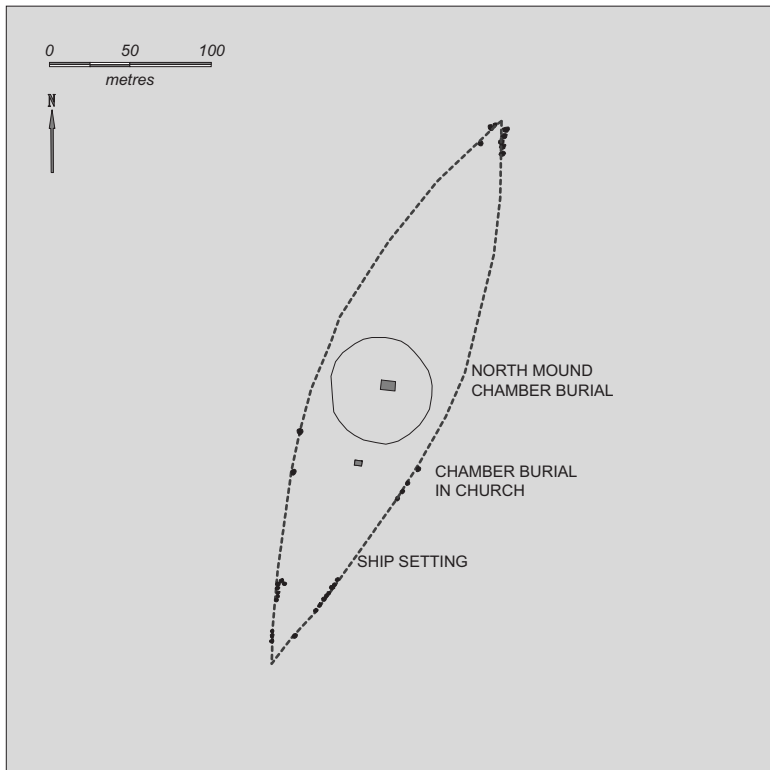


Figure 3.3. The 'pagan' monument (mid tenth century AD). Drawing by Niels-Chr. Clemmesen. © Steen Hvass.

addition, there are several fragments of pictorial carvings painted on both sides in red, yellow, black, and presumably white. What ought to be especially emphasized is a small silver cup and several fragments of other gold- and silversmith wares. This small silver cup has actually given the name to one of the Viking Period's styles, the Jelling style (Krogh 1993; Krogh and Leth-Larsen 2007).

The ship-setting included the stones dug up through the ages at the cemetery around the church and whose positions we know today, the stones under the South Mound, found in 1941, and the stones excavated in 2006. All these stones were placed symmetrically around a central axis. This central axis moved through the midpoint of the North Mound's burial chamber. It seems reasonable to assume that the stones found in 2006 could very well be the northern portion of this gigantic ship-setting, with a length of around 360 metres and a width, in the middle, of around 80 metres. The large burial chamber under the North Mound is placed in the very centre of this ship-setting.

Inside the present-day church, a burial chamber was found in 1978 underneath the floor. This burial chamber was 3.30 metres long and 2 metres wide and measured about 1 metre in height. The walls, the floor and the ceiling were all made of wood. Inside the grave, the remains of a middle-aged man, about 1.73 metres tall, were found. The person's bones were not found lying in the correct anatomical position but were randomly scattered inside the grave. Among the skeleton's remains approximately 400 small fragments of thin twisted gold thread were found, probably belonging to a piece of gold-brocaded fabric. Inside the grave lay two ornaments of silver, gilded and inlaid with niello, both with excellently made animal heads, crafted in the Jelling style. Stylistically speaking, these two ornaments from the burial chamber found inside the church are so closely related to the small silver cup from the burial chamber in the North Mound that all three of these pieces must have been virtually contemporaneous with each other. This burial chamber was placed close to the central axis running through the Jelling monuments.

The burial chamber in the church and the burial chamber in the North Mound were both linked to the ship-setting. Thanks to the silver cup from the burial chamber in the North Mound, dated to the winter season AD 958–9, and the two silver ornaments from the burial chamber in the church, it can be stated that, probably only a few years elapsed between the building of these two burial chambers (Krogh 1983, 198).

The smaller rune-stone is King Gorm's monument to his queen, Thyre. It bears, in a vertical band, in keeping with the normal mode of rune-stones of the day, the following inscription: 'King Gorm made this monument in memory of Thyre, his wife, Denmark's adornment'. This is the very first time we find the word Denmark written down on Danish soil.

King Gorm had the small rune-stone placed over his beloved queen, Thyre. Unfortunately, we do not know where this rune-stone originally stood. We can only surmise that the rune-stone has a connection to the ship-setting and to the grave layout in the North Mound, which, in the local tradition, has for centuries been called Queen Thyre's Mound. The South Mound has also for centuries been called King Gorm's Mound. Based on historical references the small rune-stone with its inscription is dated to the middle of the tenth century (Jacobsen and Molkte 1942, 74–5).

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN MONUMENT (LATE TENTH CENTURY AD)

In the second stage of its unfolding as a monumentalized site, Jelling was transformed into a Christian monument. At this time the site included a four-sided palisade, three Trelleborg long houses, the South Mound, possibly an extension of the North Mound, and the large rune-stone. This second monument would have to be linked to King Harald Bluetooth, AD 958–87 (Figure 3.4).

With its point of origin in the centre of the North Mound, the same centre as that of the gigantic ship-setting, where the burial chamber was placed, a gigantic four-sided palisade was laid out, a palisade that fenced in a ground area of 12.5 hectares (Figure 3.5). What we have here is an enclosure, with each of its four sides measuring about 360 metres long. The diagonals in this four-sided enclosure intersect in what is almost a right angle at the centre of the grave inside the North Mound. The four-sided enclosure has a rhombus-shaped ground plan, whose position is almost parallel with the central axis running through the former ship-setting. The palisade enclosure must be more recent than the ship-setting that it frames. In total, the large palisade had a perimeter of more than 1,400 metres long.

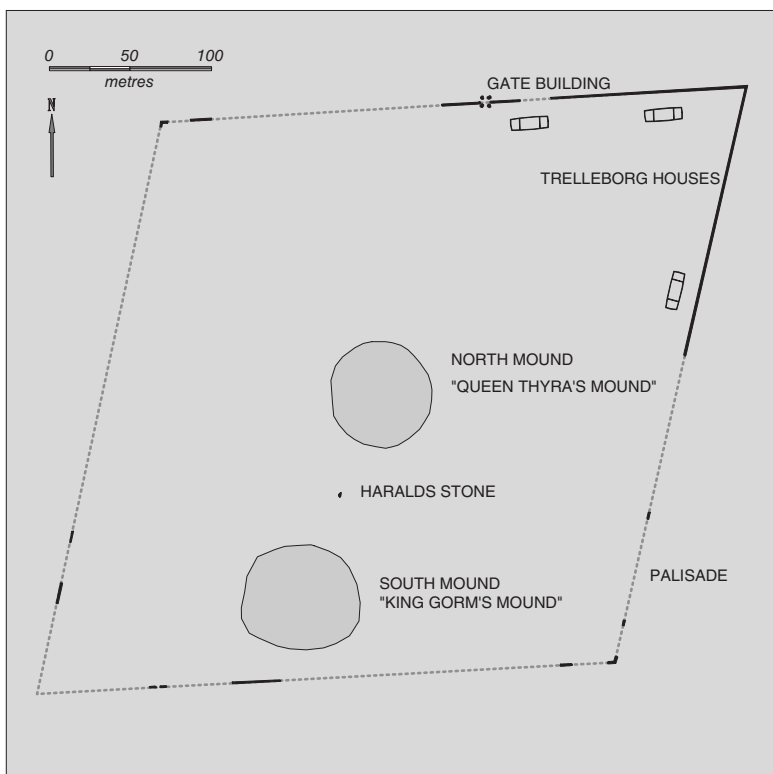


Figure 3.4. The first Christian monument (late tenth century AD). Drawing by Niels-Chr. Clemmesen. © Steen Hvass.

The palisade construction consisted of a densely packed series of heavy vertical timber posts. These were buried as far down as 1.20 metres below the original terrain's surface. This fact serves to suggest a palisade height of around 3 to 4 metres. Such a powerful construction of an enclosure is not known for any other contemporaneous layout in Denmark.

In the north-eastern part of the enclosed area, 15,000 square metres of ground area were unearthed. Here, three, virtually identical, 23-metre-long houses were found—with the very same layout, size and construction (Holst et al. 2012, 489). They were placed in parallel with and at the same distance from the palisade. This leads us to surmise that the three houses must have been

contemporaneous with the palisade. The palisade has just been dated, dendrochronologically, to around the year AD 968 (Bonde 2013, 5), which suggests that both the houses and the palisade were constructed at the beginning of the reign of Harald Bluetooth.

The monuments in Jelling (with palisade and houses) are characterized by the geometry, the fixed units of measurement, the rigorous architecture and high quality in the execution. This characterization connects the monument in Jelling to a number of other later layouts from the Viking Age situated in Denmark, the ring fortresses in Fyrkat and Aggersborg in northern Jutland and Trelleborg on Zealand.

In their layout and in the way they were constructed, these houses from Jelling are similar to houses found inside the ring fortresses

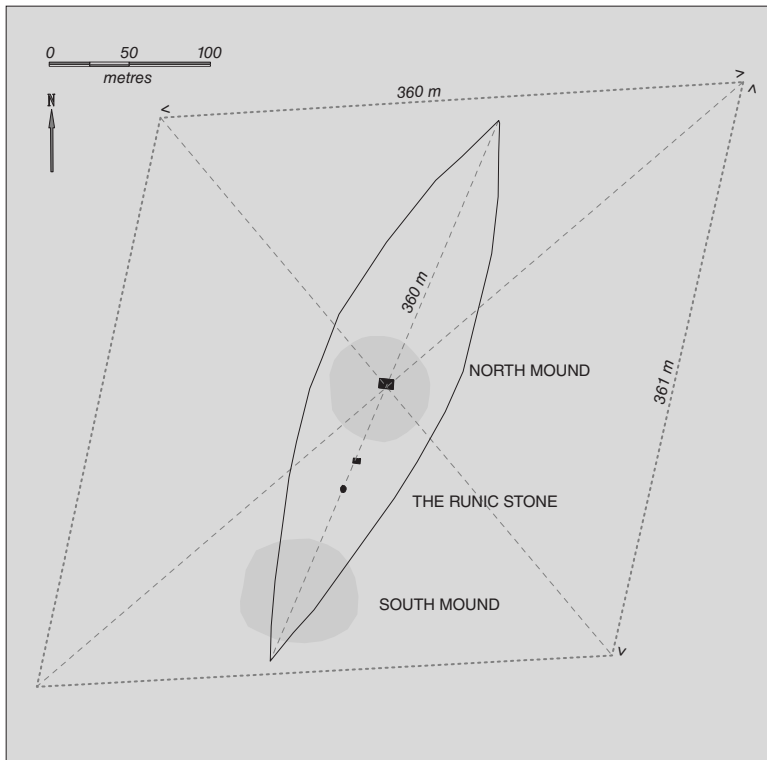


Figure 3.5. The basic measurements and geometric regularities in the layout of the ship-setting and the enclosure at Jelling. Drawing by Niels-Chr. Clemmesen. © Steen Hvass.

in Fyrkat, Aggersborg and Trelleborg in Denmark (Nørlund 1948; Schmidt 1977). This Trelleborg-house type can be dated, dendrochronologically, on the basis of what can be observed in the wood that has been preserved from the ring fortresses in Fyrkat and Trelleborg, to AD 979–81 (Andersen 1984, 15; Bonde and Christensen 1984, 111). They were all constructed in the later reign of Harald Bluetooth.

Back in Jelling, Harald Bluetooth set up the large rune-stone, possibly extended the North Mound, over the smaller mound, to a diameter of 62 metres and a height of 8 metres, and constructed the new South Mound to a diameter of 70 metres and a height of 10 metres. When Harald Bluetooth constructed this new monument in Jelling with the two new mounds he also demolished the ship-setting, by constructing the South Mound over its southern part (Krogh 1993, 255). In doing so Harald Bluetooth demolished the ‘pagan’ monument in Jelling.

The large rune-stone is King Harald Bluetooth’s elegantly decorated tribute to his parents, King Gorm and Queen Thyre, and also especially to his own achievements. It bears the following inscription: ‘King Harald commanded these monuments to be made in memory of Gorm, his Father, and in memory of Thyre, his mother—that Harald who won the whole of Denmark for himself, and Norway and made the Danes Christian’ (Figure 3.6:a).

Harald Bluetooth’s rune-stone has three distinct sides: a text side and two image sides. In the text side, in contrast to most other runic inscriptions, the inscription’s runes have been carved onto the stone in horizontal lines, as they would be in a Latin-character Christian manuscript. In the first image side a large animal is in battle with a snake, under which ‘and Norway’ can be read. And in the second image side, Christ is depicted with a cruciform halo, surrounded by interlacing filigree, under which an inscription in horizontal lines reads, ‘and made the Danes Christian’ (Figure 3.6:b).

Accordingly, the two image-sides call to mind, and in a most striking way, the appearance of two facing pages in an opened book. The human figure, with wide-open eyes and outstretched arms, is the oldest known representation of Christ on the cross to be found in the Nordic lands. With this inscription, the transition from ‘paganism’ to Christianity was being officially formalized.

With the placement of the large rune-stone in the midpoint between the centres of both the South and the North Mounds as well as its placement on the whole monument’s central axis, there

(a)



(b)



Figure 3.6. Large rune-stone of Harald Bluetooth (a) the text side; (b) the two image sides. After Kornerup 1875, pls. 4 and 5.

can be little doubt that the rune-stone and the two burial mounds were supposed to constitute an aggregate layout. Since this same central axis simultaneously forms the central axis in the ship-setting, a certain continuity in the extension and the transformation of the monuments comes to light, that is the extension and transformation from a 'pagan' monument with the ship-setting to a monument that lends itself to being placed on the dividing line between the 'pagan' and Christian religions, with the two barrows and the large rune-stone.

The two barrows, the North Mound, traditionally called Thyre's Mound, and the South Mound, called Gorm's Mound, and also the large rune-stone of Harald Bluetooth are linked, along with the rune-stone's inscription, to King Harald Bluetooth. Based on historical references the inscription is dated to after Harald's acceptance of Christianity around AD 965 (Jacobsen and Molkte 1942, 76–7).

About AD 968 Harald Bluetooth constructed the four-sided enclosure in Jelling (Figure 3.7:1), and around 980–5 Harald Bluetooth



Figure 3.7. Harald Bluetooth's building works. Map © Steen Hvass.

constructed a magnificent bridge, 760 metres long and 5 metres wide, only 10 kilometres south-west of Jelling (Schou Jørgensen 1997, 4; Braittinger 2009, 4) (Figure 3.7:2). At the same time as Harald Bluetooth was making Christianity the state religion, he started strengthening the defensive fortifications at the market towns of Århus and Hedeby (Figure 3.7:3–4). He renewed the Danevirke fortifications by constructing a wholly new 3.5-kilometre-long embankment at Denmark's southern boundary (Figure 3.7:5, Hedeby and Danevirke are today placed in North Germany). With this expansion, Harald Bluetooth's Danevirke came to be approximately 12 kilometres long.

On the large rune-stone, it is told that Harald conquered the whole of Denmark. The laying out of the large ring fortress at Aggersborg (Figure 3.7:6) and the ring fortress at Fyrkat (Schmidt 1977, 105) (Figure 3.7:7), can be seen in connection with the annexation of North Jutland into the kingdom and also, quite possibly, with the realm's connections to Norway. The laying out of the ring fortress at Nonnebakken (Figure 3.7:8), can be considered in connection with the annexation of Funen into the kingdom (Jensen and Sørensen 1990). The laying out of the ring fortress at Trelleborg (Figure 3.7:9), can be viewed in connection with the annexation of Zealand into the kingdom. All these ring fortresses were constructed in the years AD 979–81, and in three of these ring fortresses large excavations uncovered more than 100 almost uniform Trelleborg houses (Roesdahl 2008, 652). The year 983 is often mentioned as being the consummation of Harald Bluetooth's unification of the realm.

The written descriptions of Adam of Bremen from around 1070 tell us that Harald Bluetooth constructed the first church in the town of Roskilde in Zealand (Figure 3.7:10), where he was probably buried (Christensen 2000, 9). The latest church built at the same place is today Roskilde Cathedral, where almost all the Danish kings and queens from the last 1,000 years have been buried.

When the burial chamber in the North Mound in Jelling was discovered in 1820 it was clear to the finders that they were not the first people who had stepped into this space after the grave had been dug. There had previously been a break-in, as evidenced by a perforation in the ceiling. Moreover, no traces of the buried were to be found: the grave goods were partly scattered inside the chamber and partly in the soil over the chamber itself. The theory was that Harald Bluetooth built a church at Jelling and appears to have

removed his father's remains from the neighbouring 'pagan' North Mound to have them interred in the new Christian church (Krogh 1983, 209).

But there is also another explanation for the intrusion into the burial chamber in the North Mound. In Viking Age Scandinavia it is often the most richly equipped graves, often for the royal families, that have been plundered. Besides Jelling, also the ship-graves from Ladby in Denmark, Oseberg, and Godstad in Norway have been plundered. The extent of disturbance suggests that it took place in public and over a long period of time. The plunderers knew what they were looking for. The material from the different excavations of the burial chamber in Jelling corresponded with this picture. The disturbance of these burials must have been a planned political action, with the purpose of weakening an opponent as a demonstration of power and authority (Sørensen 2001, 111; Bill and Daly 2012, 808; Pedersen 2013, 136).

The palisade to the four-sided enclosure with its rhombus-shaped ground plan was burnt down and perhaps also the three Trelleborg houses, supposedly at the same time as the intrusion into the burial chamber in the North Mound. The houses and the palisade were constructed around 968. The excavations provided no evidence concerning the mending of the palisade, therefore the palisade perhaps only existed for twenty or thirty years, to about AD 988–98. Harald Bluetooth was overthrown and probably killed in a revolt led by his son, Sven Forkbeard, around 987 (Roesdahl 2008, 657).

There is reason to suspect that the intrusion into the burial chamber in the North Mound, the burning of the palisade and perhaps the three Trelleborg houses in Jelling, and the death of Harald Bluetooth, are related to the revolt of Sven Forkbeard.

THE SECOND CHRISTIAN MONUMENT (LATE TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES AD)

The third monument in Jelling was the second Christian monument and included the large rune-stone, the North Mound, the South Mound, three younger Trelleborg houses, and the church. The large rune-stone, the North Mound and the South Mound are the same

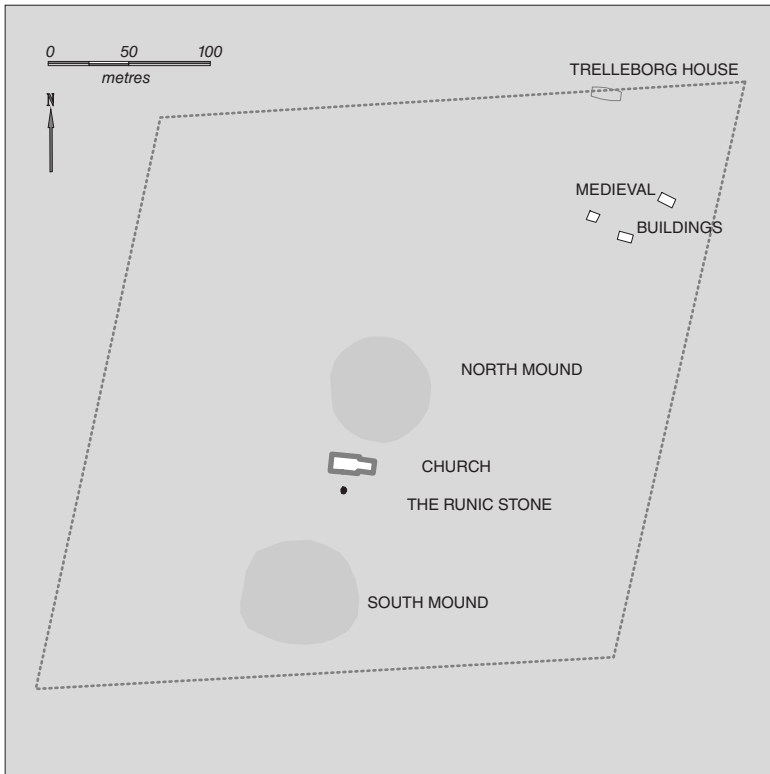


Figure 3.8. The second Christian monument (late tenth and eleventh centuries AD). Drawing by Niels-Chr. Clemmesen. © Steen Hvass.

from the second monument. This third monument would have to be linked to the time after King Harald Bluetooth (Figure 3.8).

One Trelleborg house was excavated in the northern palisade, where the house intersects the northern palisade and a further two Trelleborg houses were excavated on the area north-east of the whole monument (Randsborg 2008, 3, fig. 2.b). These Trelleborg houses in Jelling are comparable with Trelleborg houses in rural settlements from the end of the tenth century. In the rural settlements these Trelleborg houses are the main buildings of the farms, for example in Vorbasse, 20 kilometres west of Jelling (Hvass 1980, 162; 2011a, 50). The third monument in the north-eastern area in Jelling, north-east of the North Mound, has been an area for local rural settlement from the end of the tenth century.

Between the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth centuries AD, a church was built in tufa stone between the North Mound and the large rune-stone. Archaeological excavations documented a number of post-holes inside the church. Here, two or three wooden buildings existed before the present-day church (Krogh 1983, 194; Randsborg 2008, 9; Holst et al. 2012, 480). Before we have a look at the final results of the updated review of all the excavations going on inside the church, it is difficult to evaluate these older buildings and their function in combination with the whole monument in Jelling.

The first time Jelling is mentioned in the written sources is in Saxo Grammaticus' *Gesta Danorum*, The History of Denmark. It was written between 1190 and 1208. Here it is related that 'Harald made a great funeral for his mother Thyre, and now there is a church between the two mounds for his parents' (Krogh 1993, 11).

JELLING IN MODERN HISTORY (SIXTEENTH TO TWENTIETH CENTURIES AD)

Not until around 400 years later did the Danish monarchs begin to be interested in Jelling. In 1586 King Frederik II ordered the large rune-stone to be raised, and five years later, in 1591, King Frederik II's lord lieutenant had an etching made of the entire site. Excavations were undertaken in 1704, 1820, and in 1861 on the initiative of the kings.

During the German Occupation of Denmark (1940–5) Jelling became a national symbol, and this was one of the reasons why the National Museum of Denmark made extensive excavations in both burial mounds in 1941 and 1942. From this project the monuments became a national symbol with excavations taking place in Jelling every decade up until today.

In 1994 the Jelling Monuments were the first Danish site to be included on the World Heritage List of UNESCO. Being singled out as a World Heritage site is a reflection of Jelling's central importance—and not only in Denmark but also on a worldwide scale—as one of the most important memorials from the Viking Period.

On 30 August AD 2000 the bones found in 1978 in a burial chamber under the floor of the church, attributed to King Gorm the Old, were carried back to the church from examinations at the National Museum in Copenhagen. Almost all members of the Danish Royal Family attended the church ceremony.

On the morning of 3 December 2000 the Danish State celebrated the new millennium in Jelling church. In the afternoon of 3 December the Royal Jelling exhibition building was inaugurated with a new exhibition and a new book about the Monuments in Jelling (Hvass 2000).

CONCLUSION

The excavations in 2006–13 opened up a whole new chapter in the history of Jelling-related scholarship. Today, the perception of its layout's history and function is fundamentally different from what it was just a few years ago. The monuments, with the burial mounds, the ship-setting and the rhombus-formed enclosure cover an area of 12.5 hectares, the same area as nineteen football pitches (Hvass 2011b).

To preserve the new monuments and at the same time make them visible a new area has been created with the 360-metre-long ship-setting, the palisade and the four-sided enclosure with an area of 12.5 hectares, the two burial mounds—Queen Thyre's Mound and King Gorm's Mound—and in the centre of the whole monument the small rune-stone of King Gorm and the exceptionally large rune-stone of Harald Bluetooth (Hvass 2014) (Figure 3.9).

On 10 September 2013 Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II declared the new area with the Jelling monuments open.

More than a thousand years ago the monuments in Jelling were created in order to show the future:

- Here, the country was gathered into one kingdom.
- Here, the name Denmark appears for the first time.
- Here, Christianity became the official religion of Denmark.
- Here, the King—the progenitor of the current Danish house of royalty—was presented.
- Here, stands the symbol of the founding of the Danish nation.
- Here, the change from a Nordic 'pagan' society to a European Christian civilization is marked.

There is no similar monument to be found anywhere else in the world.



Figure 3.9. Jelling Monuments in AD 2010. Drawing by Niels-Chr. Clemmesen. © Steen Hvass.

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Icons of Antiquity

Remaking Megalithic Monuments in Ireland

Gabriel Cooney

INTRODUCTION: THE ENDURANCE OF MEGALITHS

Megalithic tombs dating to the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (4000–2000 cal. BC) are a very distinctive aspect of the Irish landscape (Jones 2007; Scarre 2007). They are an important monumental aspect of this period and since the 1990s our understanding of this period has been complemented by an extensive record of settlement and related activity that has been revealed through development-led archaeology (e.g. Smyth 2011). A focus of antiquarian and archaeological interest since at least the nineteenth century, the basis of modern approaches to megalithic tombs includes the systematic Megalithic Survey of Ireland that was initiated by Ruaidhrí de Valera in the 1950s, under the auspices of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland (Ó Nualláin 1989; Cody 2002 are the latest volumes published) and the excavation of key sites, for example the passage tombs of Newgrange (O’Kelly 1982; O’Kelly et al. 1983) and Knowth (Eogan 1984; 1986; Eogan and Roche 1997; Eogan and Cleary forthcoming) in the Boyne Valley and Carrowmore in Co. Sligo (Burenhult 1980; 1984; 2001). Current work includes the excavation of individual sites, work on the sources used in tomb construction, reviews of particular megalithic tomb types, landscape and regional studies, archaeoastronomy and overviews for a wide readership.

The known number of megalithic tombs on the island now approaches 1,600 and the majority of these can be categorized as falling into one of four tomb types whose names encapsulate key architectural features of each tradition, hence the terms portal tombs, court tombs, passage tombs and wedge tombs (Evans 1966, 7–15; Valera and Ó Nualláin 1972, xiii). Unsurprisingly, much of the focus of archaeological research has been on the role of these monuments for the people and societies who constructed them. Issues such as the date of construction of different tomb types (Cooney et al. 2011) and the relationship between them have been central to key debates about the Neolithic, informing such major topics as the date and character of the Mesolithic to Neolithic transition, the changing character of society over the course of the Neolithic, mortuary rites and traditions, and the links between Ireland, Britain, and north-west Europe at this time (Cooney 2000; Bradley 2007; Waddell 2010).

But one of the interesting aspects of this research is that it has strengthened the evidence for the active use of these monuments long after they were constructed. For example the recent paper by Schulting and colleagues (2012) not only demonstrated that the primary use of court tombs can be placed in the second quarter of the fourth millennium cal. BC, but also that the burial deposits at sites like the court tomb at Aghnaglack, Co. Fermanagh, which had been assumed to be ‘primary’, were actually deposited in the Bronze Age, well over a thousand years after the tomb was first constructed, indicating a complex pattern of use of such monuments. This phenomenon can be illustrated by considering the latest and most numerous type of megalithic tomb to be constructed: wedge tombs. These are associated with the Beaker/Chalcolithic phase in Ireland between 2400–2000 cal. BC (O’Brien 1999; Schulting et al. 2008). Carlin (2011) has referred to wedge tombs themselves as a notable reinvention of the megalithic tradition. While the main distribution of these tombs is in the south-west of the island, where their distribution overlaps with that of the other tomb types, they appear to have been deliberately located close to earlier tombs, suggesting that these ancient monuments were seen as still having an active role. For example at Proleek, on the Cooley peninsula in north Co. Louth, a wedge tomb was placed 80 metres to the south-east of a portal tomb, with a passage tomb on the top of Black Mountain on the skyline to the north (Buckley and Sweetman 1991; Cooney 2000). Many excavated wedge tombs show a complex history of use and adaptation, with phases of use for the deposition

of human bone and other material stretching to at least the end of the Bronze Age in the middle of the first millennium cal. bc. At the wedge tomb at Largantea, Co. Derry, the sequence starts with a communal burial deposit dated to 2455–2200 cal. bc associated with the deposition of Beaker pottery. This is followed by the episodic placement of human remains and associated ceramics and other material over a period of up to a thousand years (Schulting et al. 2008). On the Beara peninsula in the south-west of Ireland O'Brien (2002) has argued cogently that the tradition of the orientation of wedge tombs to the south-west was in the case of the example at Altar given a local and specific landscape alignment to a prominent peak. Further, he suggested that the long-lasting cultural importance of wedge tombs can be demonstrated by the incorporation of the Altar site into later prehistoric/early historic cosmologies as indicated by folk tradition and place-name evidence, alongside the continuing active role of the site indicated by its use-history (O'Brien 1999, 137–40).

These examples demonstrate that we have to consider megalithic tombs as having an active cultural significance and in many cases an extended life, long beyond their initial use and construction, which understandably has tended to be the focus of most discussions of these monuments. Of course, as Scarre (2011, 24–9) has recently reviewed, there is evidence in many areas of Atlantic Europe for the destruction of megalithic tombs and this happened in Ireland also. But even more striking is the reality that since their construction, many of these monumental features continued to confront people as an aspect of the landscape that needed to be understood. Bradley (1998, 66) argued that one of the purposes of such monuments for the people who built and used them was to construct permanent places, homes for the ancestors into the future. But the 'permanency' of these monumental places meant that they would have required explanation and cultural understanding long after the original intentions behind their construction were forgotten. So what was the role of such monuments over the millennia since their construction? Two broad strands of later interpretation of monuments have been suggested; the term 'afterlife' has come to be associated with the reuse and reinterpretation of sites after periods of disuse (see Bradley 1993, ch. 6), while on the other hand the concept of the ongoing 'life-histories' of a site reflects the view that material remains of monuments themselves may have played an active role in the way sites were reused and reinterpreted (e.g. Holtorf 1998; Ó Néill 2013).

Here the focus of discussion are a number of key sites in the developed Irish-passage-tomb tradition within the broad Boyne Valley area, which were built in the last couple of centuries of the fourth millennium BC, namely Newgrange, Knowth, and Tara, developing earlier discussion (e.g. Bradley 1993, 119–20; 2002, 141–8). These sites share the distinctive features of this tradition; a round mound composed of earth and stone covering stone megalithic structures with a passage leading to internal chambers, enhanced on the interior and, in the case of Newgrange and Knowth, on the exterior kerb with megalithic art. The primary use of the structures focused on the deposition of cremated and unburnt bone and associated material within the tombs, and related and repeated activity outside (Bergh 1995; Cooney 2014). These are sites where archaeological excavation has provided us with the details of the site histories after their initial construction and use in the centuries around 3000 BC. They are also sites which feature prominently in Irish mythological tales, based on oral tradition and for which the earliest written sources may date to the eighth century AD but which could have been transcribed as late as the tenth/eleventh century (O’Kelly 1982, 45; Ó Cróinín 1995, 45–7; Bhreathnach 2014, 1–8). These sources provide us with the opportunity to compare and set the oral/historic reception of these sites alongside the archaeological record. A landscape perspective is taken, looking not just at the histories of individual monuments but also their wider setting and context and focusing on the engagement of people with their material world (e.g. O’Connor et al. 2009). This dual focus provides a very useful framework for thinking about the issue of the active role that megaliths played in processes of social and cultural production.

TARA, NEWGRANGE, AND KNOWTH: A HISTORIC SUMMARY

Before considering the detail of the archaeological record it is relevant to summarize the late-prehistoric and early-historic attributes of these three sites (Figure 4.1).

The passage tomb at Tara (Figure 4.2) is known as *Duma na nGiall* (the Mound of the Hostages), a name attributed by nineteenth-century antiquarians matching up the physical record of monuments

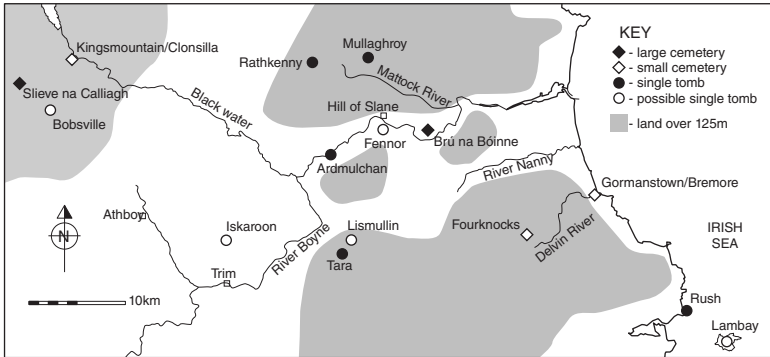


Figure 4.1. Location map of sites mentioned in the chapter. Map by Conor McHale.



Figure 4.2. The Hill of Tara from the east, illustrating Mound of the Hostages location, off-centre to the right of the photograph. © National Monuments Service Photographic Unit, DAHG.

on the ground on the distinctive north–south ridge, known as the Hill of Tara, with mytho-historic descriptions of Tara (Petrie 1839; Macalister 1919) as one of the island’s major royal sites, which would go on to become the pre-eminent royal site, contested ground for the high-kingship of Ireland (Newman 1997; Bhreathnach 2005),

Tara is also strongly linked with the traditional narrative of the Christianization of Ireland in the fifth century AD. St Patrick, documented as the primary missionary in this process, is said to have lit the Easter/Paschal fire on the Hill of Slane, north of and visible from Tara. He was challenged by Lóegaire, king of Tara for breaking a royal edict and this provided Patrick with the entrée to establish the power of Christianity over that of the king and to defeat the 'pagan' priests or druids (Charles-Edwards 2000, 19). The new religious and associated social orders had a negative attitude towards Tara and other 'pagan' ceremonial capitals (Bhreathnach 2011), and initiated a shift to new foci in the landscape. The Hill of Slane, for example, became an important early ecclesiastical centre (Swift 2008, 7–8).

During the Medieval period, Newgrange (Figure 4.3) came to be regarded as synonymous with the wider complex of monuments dating back to the Neolithic in the specific area called the Bend of the Boyne and known as Brú na Bóinne (Petrie 1845, 101). This term has been adopted as the name of the World Heritage Site (see Smyth 2009). As O'Kelly (1982, 45) has pointed out, in early Irish literature there seems to have been two main meanings to the Brú. It was seen as both the home of the supernatural beings known as the Tuatha Dé Danann (people of the goddess Danu) and the burial mounds of the 'pagan' kings of Tara, which are located to the south and on the opposite side of the River Boyne (Figure 4.1). Newgrange and the other monuments were regarded as the abode of the most powerful of the Tuatha, particular Dagda, his wife Boann (after whom the River Boyne is named) and his son Aonghus. O'Kelly (1982, 46) suggests that these two concepts may have been deliberately linked in Christian times when oral traditions were being written down as a way of associating the contemporary dynasty associated with Tara with the Brú and the mythological power of the Tuatha Dé.

While geographically located within Brú na Bóinne, to the north-west of Newgrange, Knowth (Figure 4.4) had a very different function during the Early Medieval period. Byrne (1968) identified Knowth as the residence of the kings of north Brega from at least the ninth century AD and historical annals note the death of an individual termed *rex Cnodbai*, king of Knowth in AD 818. In discussing the background of this kingship, Swift (2008, 11) has pointed out that it can be traced back to a man called Áed of Slane in the sixth century, who is regarded as the founder of the Brega dynasty (Byrne 1973, 87–105). In the seventh century this group dominates the records for



Figure 4.3. Aerial photograph of Newgrange from the south. © National Monuments Service Photographic Unit, DAHG.

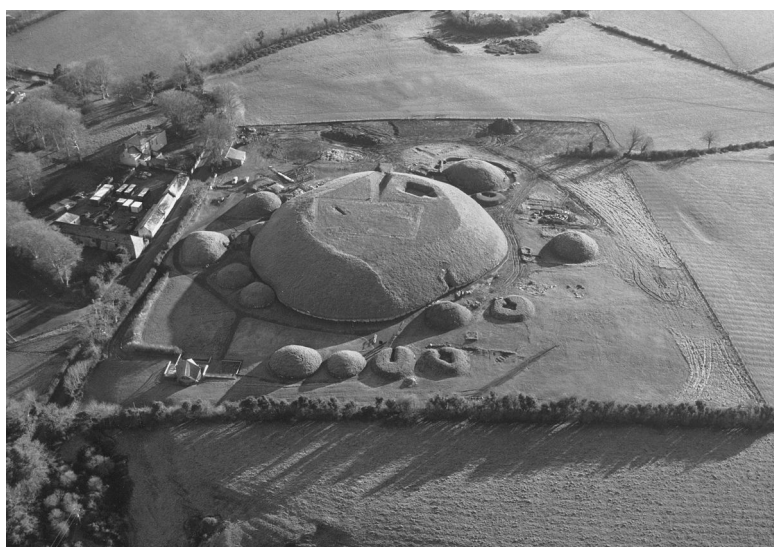


Figure 4.4. Aerial photograph of the Knowth complex of passage tombs, from the north-west. © National Monuments Service Photographic Unit, DAHG.

the kingship of Tara. What the historical sources clearly indicate then is also a complicated web of political and religious connections between the sites focused on here. Discussing the relationship of Knowth and Slane, Eogan (1991, 119) suggested that it was with the establishment of the royal residence of the North Brega dynasty at Knowth around AD 800 that Slane emerged as an important ecclesiastical site. In the ninth and tenth centuries AD Slane became established as the church site of the kings of Knowth.

In providing this very brief account it was useful to discuss the concept of Brú na Bóinne to introduce and talk about Newgrange before Knowth. In discussing the archaeological record below and its implications for understanding the variations and differences in the life of these monuments, Knowth is considered before Newgrange.

TARA: BUILDING A LINEAGE FROM THE PAST

As documented by O'Sullivan (2005) in bringing the results of the excavations of the monument in the 1950s to publication, the construction and initial, intense period of the use of the Mound of the Hostages passage tomb occurred in the Neolithic period (see Figure 4.5), most likely around 3100 cal. BC (Bayliss and O'Sullivan 2013, 98). The next major phase of activity was in the Early Bronze Age (beginning in the early to mid twenty-first century cal. BC) with the placement of crouched inhumations and cremated bone within the tomb, followed by a switch to the deposition of cremated bone in the overlying mound in the first half of the twentieth century cal. BC. There are nineteen Early Bronze Age burial deposits in the mound predominantly dating down to the second half of the nineteenth century cal. BC, a period of perhaps six to eight generations (Bayliss and O'Sullivan 2013, 96; Mount 2013). Seven of these have stone settings around them or they were placed in cists, in all cases these are dominated by the use of thin, angular shale slabs. It is remarkable that these burials, placed within stone settings or in cists, are located in the eastern area of the cairn, in the vicinity of the passage tomb structure, with the burials in pits consistently placed further west. There are close parallels between the way in which particular stone settings around burials were constructed and the way in which similar earlier settings and cists in the tomb itself, the pre-cairn cists and

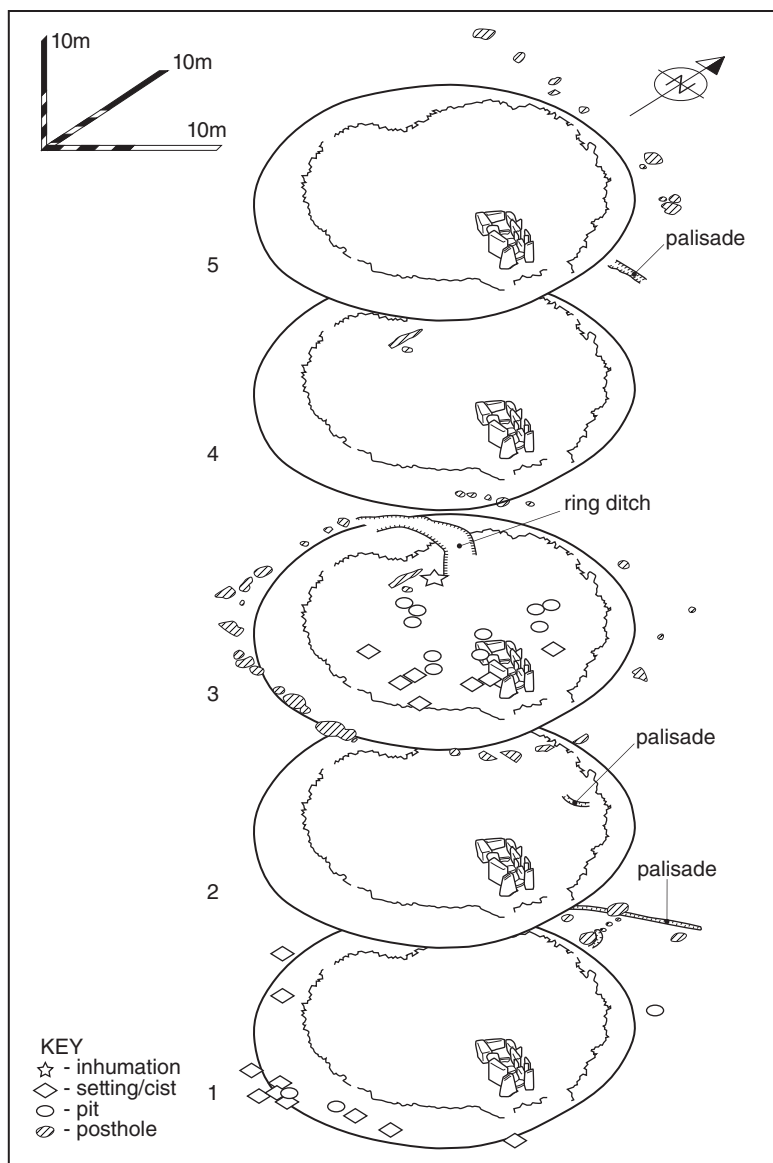


Figure 4.5. Archaeological phases in the site history of the Mound of the Hostages. Phase 3 represents the Early Bronze Age cemetery. Drawing by Conor McHale after Bayliss and O'Sullivan 2013.

settings on the perimeter of the mound were created. As well as providing an appropriate setting for protecting and marking the location of the Bronze Age burials, a question can be raised by these similarities as to whether these earlier structures might have been the inspiration for the particular form of the cists, creating a deliberate sense of continuity through ritual action and commemoration spanning the Neolithic and Bronze Age phases (Cooney and Rice 2013).

The final Bronze Age burial in the mound (Burial 30) was placed in a pit to the north-west of all the others and consisted of the crouched inhumation of an adolescent male buried with an elaborate necklace and other grave goods, dating to the seventeenth century BC, after a gap of perhaps seven or eight generations (Bayliss and O'Sullivan 2013, 98). The pit in which the burial was placed was covered by what appears to be a protective sandstone slab. Bayliss and O'Sullivan (2013, 98) point out that inhumation had been replaced by cremation as the dominant mortuary rite in Ireland at least 150 years before this burial and Sheridan et al. (2013) have demonstrated that he had exceptional social status. It is tempting to suggest that we may be seeing here a consciously anachronistic funerary rite being deliberately used for the last placement of an auspicious individual in this cemetery mound. The mode of burial appears to deliberately recall the earliest Early Bronze Age burials in the tomb.

Placing the passage tomb at Tara in a wider context (Figure 4.2), the monument and the area to the north of it appear to have been the focus of activity in the later Neolithic and into the Bronze Age (Newman 1997; 1998). A formal entranceway into this area is provided by the cursus-like linear embanked feature known as the Banqueting Hall (but see Newman 1997 for discussion of a possible later date). Geophysical survey has demonstrated the presence of a large circle composed of a ditch with posts on either side that respects the southern end of the Banqueting Hall and encloses the Mound of the Hostages (Fenwick and Newman 2002). It is in this landscape setting that the development of a barrow cemetery over the course of the Bronze Age and Iron Age at Tara can be placed. As we have seen, the Mound of the Hostages was reused extensively as a cemetery mound in the Early Bronze Age. Against this background it is perhaps not surprising that one of the two small groups of the postulated earliest barrows at Tara is found to the south of the Mound of the Hostages. Over the course of the second and first millennia BC the passage tomb becomes a focus of one of the two major clusters of

barrows in the barrow cemetery. This would fit into Newman's (1997, ch. 8) phases 5 and 6 of the development of the Tara complex, when ring-ditches, bowl-barrows and ring-barrows were built. In the first century BC the construction of the large enclosure of Ráith na Ríg, which as Mallory (2013, 165) points out is a characteristic, iconic feature of Irish royal sites/provincial capitals like Tara, served to emphasize the location of the Mound of the Hostages barrow cluster (see Ó Néill 2013 for further discussion, focusing on the relationship between the Mound of the Hostages and Ráith na Ríg). And in the following phases (7 and 8) some of the barrows here were in turn incorporated into the large earthworks that were constructed inside and to the north and south of Ráith na Ríg (Newman 1997, fig. 84; see also Newman 1998).

If we think in historical and social terms, this concentration of sites into clusters appears to have been the result of a deliberate decision to place monuments, and the remains and memory of the individuals represented in the graves within them, close to and in relation to older and earlier monuments. As barrow cemeteries developed, lineage or lineages could be spatially and historically linked and be seen to be descended from what over time would have been a mythic ancestry. Each episode of adding on a barrow onto the side of a cluster or individual monument, digging the grave, placing the bones (often only a token of the cremated remains of the person), digging the ditch and placing the circular mound over the grave, served to reinforce these links through these highly symbolic actions (Garwood 2008; Cooney 2009; Cooney and Rice 2013) and echoed the earlier pattern of the placement of burials in the Mound of the Hostages Early Bronze Age cemetery.

This pattern of reinforcement of links with the past through grave and barrow location raises the possibility of a continuing symbolic role for the stones of the Mound of the Hostages passage tomb in later prehistory. About 2 metres south-east of the mound of the monument and 10 metres south-east of the tomb entrance there is a ring-ditch, which was revealed through excavation. Cremated bone from the fill of the ring-ditch produced a Late Bronze Age date, while a cremation scatter on the surface of the interior yielded an Iron Age date. Placed in position on the base of the north-west of the ring-ditch was a boulder with pecking, which O'Sullivan (2005, 68) suggests can be taken as an example of megalithic art. In this context it could be argued that this ring-ditch may have been placed both in deliberate juxtaposition with the Mound of the Hostages and incorporating a stone from it (Cooney and Rice 2013).

KNOWTH: REVITALIZING THE PAST

Knowth, Co. Meath, had been a major centre of activity in the Neolithic. Following on the construction and use of the large passage tomb (Knowth 1) at the centre of the complex, there was significant Late Neolithic and Beaker/Chalcolithic activity there (Eogan and Roche 1997). But unlike Tara it was not a focus during the Bronze Age, and its use as an Iron Age cemetery, from about 100 BC, appears to represent a deliberate evocation of its status as an ancient, sacred place, chosen, as Eogan (2012, 1) has put it, as a 'focus of wider religious significance'. It is this reuse of Knowth as a place of burial that is taken as the focus of discussion here as it is a theme that continues into the Early Medieval period (Figure 4.6). There are fourteen burials that can be dated to between 100 BC and AD 300 and all appear to have been flexed or crouched inhumations. Four of the burials were of children and ten of young adults. The cemetery was on the northern, western and southern sides of the large mound (Knowth 1) built in the Neolithic to cover two passage tombs. The careful location and placement of the burials in the Late Iron Age suggest there was a concern with having them physically close to either the main mound or the small passage tomb mounds close to it, in the shadow of past times. A feature of the Knowth burials is the richness of the objects placed with the dead. Eleven of the burials had grave goods, such as rings, glass and bone bead necklaces and bracelets (Eogan 2012, ch. 2).

What are we to make of the mortuary practices that we see in the cemetery at Knowth? The similarity between some of the objects placed with the dead, as in a double male burial, with objects found in a burnt state with Iron Age cremated deposits elsewhere indicate that cremation and inhumation were being practised at the same time. This deliberate choice of (crouched/flexed) inhumation as a burial rite is shared with a small number of sites in eastern Ireland at this time and has been taken as an indicator of elite links with Britain (McGarry 2009), preceding the wider use of extended inhumation burial in Ireland from the late fourth century AD, but both phases are seen as the result of links with peri-Roman and Roman Britain. It seems likely that the burials here represent activity over a few hundred years. That combined with the small number of child burials suggests that access to burial in this area, although somewhat dispersed was socially restricted. The furnished child burials on the other hand indicate that social status was measured on a lineage basis.

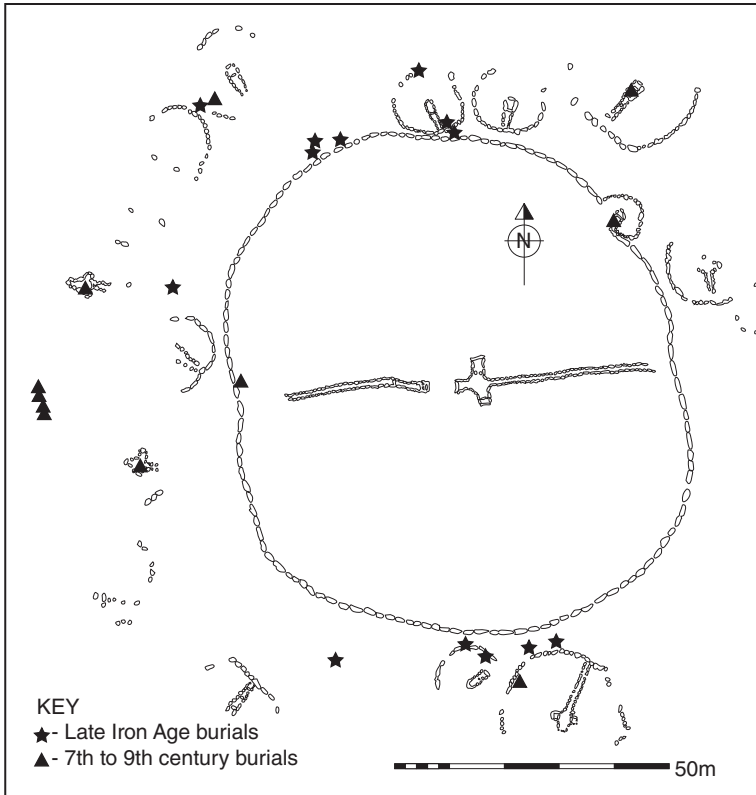


Figure 4.6. The location of the Iron Age and Early Medieval burials at Knowth. Drawing by Conor McHale after Eogan 2012.

This ties in with the strong sense of the development of social hierarchy seen in early historic sources. A sense of differentiation is also seen in the presence or absence of material placed with the person in the grave. The isotope analysis undertaken by Cahill-Wilson and colleagues (2012) suggests that some of the individuals were of local origin and there were others whose origin was either further north in Ireland or in northern Britain.

During the Early Medieval period, as discussed above, Knowth can be identified as the royal residence of North Brega. The main passage tomb mound was used for two different but related functions at this time. First, there were further burials dating from the seventh to the ninth centuries AD and secondly the construction of a double-ditched

enclosure around the mound in the seventh or eighth century AD with extensive evidence for settlement including rectangular houses and associated activity areas (Eogan 2012). As noted above, the inhabitants of Knowth by then were Christian and one might have expected their burial at Slane, by then the chief church of northern Brega. However, some individuals were buried at Knowth and in a couple of instances the bodies were deliberately placed in a passage tomb (Figure 4.6).

What the two phases in the cemetery at Knowth make clear is that there was a very deliberate evocation or creation of links with an ancestral past. As O'Brien and Bhreathnach have pointed out (2013) this could be attributed to either non-local groups or emerging local dynasties inventing or reinforcing their historical and ancestral connections through the placement of burials, the associated mortuary rites and the establishment of physical links with both a mythic and genealogical past (Rowlands 1993).

NEWGRANGE: ANOTHER WORLD

The Knowth burials can be linked to other signs of Romanization in the Boyne area, such as activity at Tara at the Rath of the Synods site to the north of the Mound of the Hostages and outside Ráith na Ríg. Here it is clear that activities on this site, whether they were settlement-orientated (Grogan 2008) or focused on ceremony (Dowling 2006) were conducted by people with direct contact with the Roman world between the first and fourth centuries AD and were influenced, as Bhreathnach (2014, 152) has put it, by the multi-faceted culture of that world. Connections with this Late Antique world are also demonstrated in the deposition of a large number of Roman objects around the area of the entrance to Newgrange (Figure 4.7) (Raftery 1994, fig. 134). Janiszewski (2011) has recently reviewed this material, which is focused on the last quarter of the fourth century AD. He suggests that the interpretation of this material as votive offerings deposited by travellers, merchants or pilgrims from Roman Britain to the local deities is unlikely and that the finds instead should be seen in terms of military and diplomatic contacts between the barbarian world and the Roman Empire. These contacts included service in the Roman army and diplomatic payments, as well as looting raids

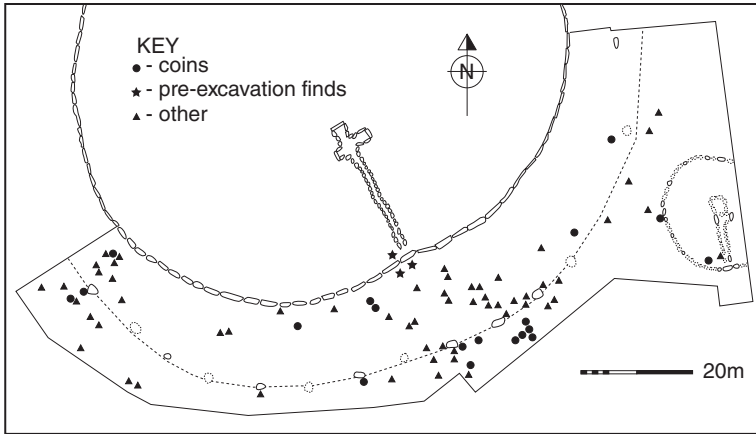


Figure 4.7. The location of the Roman material at Newgrange. Drawing by Conor McHale after Raftery 1994.

(Bateson 1973; Janiszewski 2011, 61). This material provides support for the increasing recognition of the influence of the Roman world on Ireland, particularly the eastern coastal area. It is now being suggested that rather than Early Medieval society in Ireland emerging from a later prehistoric Celtic world largely untouched by Roman influences, that such influences may actually have had a catalytic role in the emergence of that society. It is after all in the Late Roman world that the Christianization of Ireland owes its roots.

In terms of the long-term history of Newgrange what is striking is that the Roman Iron Age material from the site, which has now be shown to include the deposition of horse bone (Bendrey et al. 2013) is the first substantial body of archaeological material that can be recognized after the Beaker/Chalcolithic phase. Activity in the Late Neolithic and Beaker/Chalcolithic phases focused on the exterior of the tomb in the vicinity of the entrance and the focus seems to have been on the elaboration of this area, as Cooney and Grogan (1999) argued, deliberately drawing on the importance of the monument even as the ceremonial focus shifted to the construction of large open-air monuments; the pit enclosure and the stone circle (see Figure 4.3). But from this point at c. 2000 cal. BC to the deposition of material in the same area in the first centuries AD (and Ó Néill 2013 suggests there may have been a modification of the monument around the same time) there is little sign in the archaeological record of how people engaged with the monument. It seems very likely that the

significance of Newgrange as a shrine where a collection of gold objects was deposited, similar to deposits found both within the Roman Empire and in the barbarian world, was predicated on recognition of it as a sacred place.

DIFFERENT MONUMENTS, DIFFERENT LIVES

What the archaeological and historical narratives of the passage tombs of Tara, Knowth, and Newgrange suggest is that these monuments had quite different biographies as people engaged with them in later prehistory and the early historic period and gave them meaning. These biographies may be related to wider patterns of how monuments are recalled and drawn upon actively over time (Bradley 2002, ch. 5).

At Tara the changing character of burial deposits in the Mound of the Hostages itself, its role as a focus for one of the clusters in barrow cemetery, the direct reference back to the passage tomb in the ring barrow placed beside it, and the focus on the locale of the mound as the centre of the royal site complex of monuments, all suggest that there was a *continuous draw* on the symbolic power of this ancient monument. As Bradley (2002, 141–6) put it, the reinterpretation of Tara in oral and written tradition in the Early Medieval period was played out in a landscape made up of ancient monuments and the most ancient of them was the passage tomb of the Mound of the Hostages.

Knowth provides us with an example of what appears to be the active *reinvention* of the power of a place long after its initial use. The Iron Age and Early Medieval burials and the Early Medieval transformation of the mound itself can be interpreted as the emerging elite of northern Brega forging physical links with a deep ancestral past. The power of this link is demonstrated by the placement of some of the seventh- to ninth-century AD burials, people who would be expected at this point to be Christian, inside small passage tombs at Knowth.

Newgrange provides both the most challenging sequence to interpret. There is little later activity but despite this *absence* it retained significance. Ó hÓgáin (1999) and others have commented on the parallels in the oral traditions about the site that are recorded in the early historic period in the mythological tales, notably a link with the sun, and the archaeological records, specifically the alignment of

the passage tomb on the sunrise at the winter solstice. Carey (1990) posits the problem of explaining this in terms of continuity in that it implies an oral tradition spanning up to 4,000 years, at some stage during which there may have been a language change with the arrival of Celtic, and in the latter stages of which Christianity began. Hence, Newgrange may act as a reminder that a monument may retain social importance and power even though, or perhaps because, little or no later activity takes place there.

In his discussion of how the ancient past is reworked, Bradley (2002, 112–24) suggests that there are three broad approaches that people take in dealing with the physical remains of the past; it is interpreted, confronted or used for legitimization. While not fitting perfectly into this broad scheme, it can be suggested that the three Neolithic passage tombs considered here provide examples of each of these approaches. The Mound of the Hostages continued to be interpreted right up to the Early Medieval period. The scale of Knowth and Newgrange might have meant that they were actively regarded as special or sacred from the time of construction. Against this background the burials at Knowth in the Iron Age and Early Medieval period appear to represent a deliberate attempt by an emerging royal group to gain legitimization for their aspirations. Finally, at Newgrange it would appear that it was not until the fourth century AD, and in the context of people who were in tune and sympathy with cult practice in the Late Roman world, that there was confidence to confront as well as to honour this sacred, iconic monument.

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Beowulf and Archaeology

Megaliths Imagined and Encountered in Early Medieval Europe

Howard Williams

INTRODUCTION

Since the mid nineteenth century AD, the poem *Beowulf* has long been a quarry for inspiration, analogy and insight for those exploring the archaeology of Early Medieval Britain and Scandinavia (Cramp 1957; Hills 1997; Webster 1998; Owen-Crocker 2000). The dialogue of archaeology and poem has been employed to explore a range of Early Medieval social practices and structures: the production and circulation of weapons and armour through inheritance and gift-giving, the role of vessels and feasting practices, hall-building and ceremony, the hoarding of treasure, and various dimensions of funerary practice including barrow-burial, boat-burial, and cremation. In discussing many of these practices, scholars have recently pointed to the sense of the past in the poem as a practice-orientated form of social memory. Synergies have been identified between heroic poetry and the ceremonial use of material culture, monuments, architectures, and landscapes identified in poetry and archaeological evidence as distinct but related technologies of remembrance within the hierarchical Christian Anglo-Saxon kingdoms that emerge during the mid to late seventh century AD (Williams 1998; 2006; 2011a; 2011b; Owen-Crocker 2000; Semple 2013). In this fashion, the assertions of legitimacy and identities by Early Medieval elites, including their claims to land, power

and people, were performed through the ritualized reuse, appropriation and naming of ancient monuments and their deployment within rituals and oral performances, including poetry (Semple 2013; see also Price 2010). The locations and immediate environs of major later Anglo-Saxon churches and elite residences, and the maritime and land routes connecting them, provided the dramaturgical and ritualized settings and media by which social memories were transmitted and reproduced. Landmarks such as ancient monuments were actively integrated through reuse for a variety of functions from burial to assembly (Williams 2006; Reynolds and Langlands 2011; Semple 2013). In particular, Sarah Semple's (2013) important interdisciplinary survey and analysis of Anglo-Saxon perceptions and reuse of prehistoric monuments from the fifth to the eleventh centuries AD, identifies the variegated and shifting perceptions of prehistoric monuments revealed by later Anglo-Saxon texts, manuscript illustrations, place-names and archaeological evidence (see also Semple 1998; 2004).

While building on this research, this chapter tackles afresh the striking instance, often cited but rarely dealt with in any depth or scope, of the portrayal of an ancient stone barrow in the late-tenth or early-eleventh-century poem *Beowulf*. This epic text is the longest English verse source to survive from prior to the Norman conquest (1066) and most likely enshrines a far earlier set of oral poetry circulating during the seventh and eighth centuries if not earlier still. Drawing on John Hines's approach to the relationship between Anglo-Saxon literature and archaeology (Hines 2008; 2011) and Sarah Semple's specific discussions of ancient monuments as places of fear and torment in the later Anglo-Saxon landscape (Semple 1998; 2004; 2013), I utilize two familiar verse translations (Bradley 1982; Heaney 2002, drawing quotations from the latter) to interrogate what the poem reveals about later Anglo-Saxon perceptions of megalithic structures and their cultural biographies.

THE DRAGON'S MOUND IN *BEOWULF*

For those unfamiliar with the story, it is important to begin with a brief account of how the dragon's mound is key within the structure of the poem. As a young hero, Beowulf travels over the sea to

Denmark, where he defeats the monster Grendel who had plagued King Hrothgar's hall: Heorot. The hero then defeats Grendel's mother within her cave. As an old king, having ruled his land for fifty winters in Geatland (line 2209), a new subterranean threat emerges from the wilderness surrounding his own kingdom: a dragon. The dragon's mound is the setting for Beowulf's third and final encounter with a monster and his subsequent death and funeral (lines 2200–3182).

The poem *Beowulf* tells us that the dragon's lair was a stony barrow (Old English: *stānbeorh*) built by an ancient race of giants on a headland by the sea, subsequently sought out and guarded by the dragon. The barrow was disturbed by an exile from Beowulf's kingdom who retrieved a goblet to use as a gift for Beowulf, his lord, to appease and atone for unnamed crimes. As recipient of the cursed gift, Beowulf and his kingdom receive the wrath of the dragon who, upon waking, realizes the treasure is missing and exacts revenge through aerial fiery destruction of the kingdom's halls (lines 2312–24). Guided by the thief and accompanied by a small retinue, Beowulf goes to the barrow and, leaving his companions above ground, alone enters into the mound via a hidden path to slay the dragon. His companions flee but one of them, Wiglaf, enters the mound to assist his lord in the fight. Beowulf and Wiglaf slay the beast but the hero dies from his wounds. Under Wiglaf's direction, Beowulf is cremated on a nearby headland and a mound is raised over the pyre-site as a landmark for seafarers. The cursed treasure from the dragon's mound—described as consisting of weapons and armour, feasting gear and a standard—is buried with the hero and king; the riches are not divided and circulated among Beowulf's people.

Since the Victorian era, it has been recognized that the poem might be describing a Neolithic passage grave or chambered tomb. This interpretation has received repeated but brief commentaries by many discussants of the relationship between the poem and archaeology (e.g. Wright 1847; Cramp 1957; Hills 1997; Webster 1998). Most recently, Semple (2013) cites *Beowulf* as a key source in relation to a range of other literary, documentary, visual, and toponymic evidence that reveals how ancient monuments were perceived as places of both fame and infamy in the Christian later Anglo-Saxon landscape (here taken to refer to the late seventh to eleventh centuries AD). The argument that the dragon's mound might be a Neolithic monument finds support from the concrete evidence that Early Medieval burials of the late fifth to the late seventh centuries AD were often deliberately

inserted into, and situated around, Neolithic long barrows, a practice that was part of a wider funerary reuse of prehistoric and Roman-period ruins and monuments (see Williams 1998; 2006; Semple 1998; 2013). Furthermore, toponymic evidence reveals how striking megalithic monuments, notably Wayland's Smithy, Oxfordshire, could be afforded ambivalent legendary associations (Grinsell 1991; Owen-Crocker 2000, 62–3). *Beowulf* is thus taken to provide a key case-study of a wider phenomenon: the mythological and legendary afterlives of megaliths in the Medieval world, places of fear rather than veneration (see also Holtorf 1996; Hutton 2009; Vejby 2012). The remainder of this chapter seeks to query and enhance this well-established argument by exploring the biography and materiality of the dragon's mound as portrayed in the poem.

A BIOGRAPHY FOR THE DRAGON'S MOUND

While archaeologists have tended to explore the archaeological biographies of megalithic monuments (e.g. Holtorf 1996), I here want to apply this approach to the poem itself. The dragon's mound is portrayed as on the periphery of Beowulf's kingdom—like Grendel and Grendel's mother's mere was for Hrothgar's—a liminal place physically and conceptually on the very edge of the human world, 'on a wide headland/close to the waves' (lines 2243–4) near the cliff top (line 2417). The mound and its landscape setting reveal its multi-temporal quality in the poem; we are told of at least six phases of use:

- i. the location was selected and the stone barrow made by the Last Survivor—the only remaining member of the ancient race—as a cache to contain his dead people's treasures (lines 2242–69);
- ii. some time later, it was sought out and became the habitation for a sleeping dragon guarding the treasure (lines 2270–5);
- iii. three hundred years later it became the landscape where only an exile dared to venture to steal a goblet, thus rousing the dragon to vengeance (lines 2214–18);
- iv. in response, it became a place of conflict and death where Beowulf and Wiglaf encountered the dragon and both the dragon and Beowulf perished (lines 2410–820);

- v. it became a funerary landscape comprised of at least three commemorative foci:
 - a. the empty stone barrow from whence the dragon's corpse and the treasure were taken (lines 3129–31);
 - b. the site of Beowulf's cremation over which a mound was raised and in which the dragon's treasure was interred: a landmark for seafarers (lines 3136–82);
 - c. the sea-cliff over which the dragon's body was consigned to the waves (line 3131).
- vi. at Beowulf's funeral, a lamenting woman foresaw a future in which the Geatish kingdom was destroyed: imagining cataclysmic events that created an abandoned set of monuments on the headland: the dragon's mound and Beowulf's counterpoised (lines 3150–5).

This 'monument biography' rendered the dragon's mound a mnemonic time-mark—simultaneously famous and infamous—linking together each biographical stage from its building to the poet's present: a cache of giants' treasure, a dragon's den, a place of exiles and theft, a place for heroic conflict and death and finally a component in the mortuary drama of the hero's funeral. For the poet and his audience, the mound is situated in a literary topography of memory in the Scandinavian past and simultaneously tangible through innumerable prehistoric monument complexes within the environs of Early Medieval ecclesiastical and aristocratic central places across Anglo-Saxon England (Semple 2013, 108–42). Hence, the mnemonic power of this poetic landscape lay, not in its specificity, but in its mutability and replication across the coastal and maritime Anglo-Saxon royal and ecclesiastical landscapes. In these environments, ancient monuments were suitable settings for legendary hagiographic and heroic deeds against demonic forces and understood relationally with regard to contemporary megalithic architectures of mausolea, crypts and other hypogeal and semi-hypogeal structures (Williams 2006; Semple 2013).

THE MOUND'S ARCHITECTURAL MATERIALITY

To further understand the significance of the mound, we must also engage with its lithic materiality. The poem describes how the mound

contained 'the steep vaults of a stone-roofed barrow' (line 2213), 'earth-house' (line 2232), 'earth-vault' (line 2410), 'underground barrow' (line 2411) and 'treasure-lodge' (line 2830).

This was a secret and fearful underground space entered via a prominent threshold. Yet the thief enters via a 'hidden passage, unknown to men' (lines 2213–14); Beowulf enters alone 'under the crag' (line 2541) along 'no coward path' (line 2541). Within were vaults (lines 2323 and 3128) and water: 'a stone arch and a gushing stream/that burst from the barrow, blazing and wafting/a deadly heat' (lines 2545–7). Following his fight with the dragon, Beowulf apprehends 'those gigantic stones, saw how the earthwork/was braced with arches built over columns' (lines 2719–20), a 'rock-piled roof' (line 2755). The passage to the chamber was presumably dark and constricted, traversed thrice only by individuals (the thief, Beowulf and then Wiglaf) and after the dragon's death by a select group of eight who entered with torches (lines 3120–3, 3125). The dragon does not explicitly use this route to enter and leave the mound. A further component of the mound was a plinth or seat beside the earthwork upon which Beowulf's dying body is sat while Wiglaf retrieves the treasure (line 2717). This is surely in daylight and beside the entrance for when Wiglaf re-enters, it is on passing the plinth/seat that he sees the treasure (line 2756).

All these material references are generic, yet scholars have been all too keen to confine the poem to a Neolithic megalithic straightjacket. As such, this is very much a Victorian contrivance, equating a specific architectural typology to verify the historicity of one dimension of the poem. My point is not to deny that a megalithic monument might have inspired the poem: the chambers, passages, portals, and kerbs make Neolithic monuments one plausible source of influence (see Scarre 2007, 76–81). In particular, the false portals of Cotswold-Severn chambered tombs like Belas Knap (Gloucestershire) or West Kennet (Wiltshire) equate well with the idea of an impassable threshold, a hidden passage known only to the thief. Yet it must be remembered that megalithic monuments find close parallel with *Beowulf* only through their post-excavation reconstruction during the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Before then, far fewer megaliths would have had visible passages and chambers free of earth and accessible in the fashion the poem describes.

Early Medieval populations in Britain would, however, have experience of a wider range of other ancient subterranean and

semi-subterranean spaces: Iron Age souterrains as well as Roman-period temples, mausolea, bathhouses, underfloor heating systems, aqueducts and drains (Hunter 1974, 35). Indeed, there is clear archaeological evidence that some of these were reused for burial, as were prehistoric burial mounds, within Christian later Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical landscapes. For example the reuse of a Roman mausoleum at Wells (Somerset) as an ossuary and in turn as a mortuary chapel associated with the Anglo-Saxon minster would undoubtedly have involved the discovery and manipulation of ancient human remains as well as the translation of more recently interred bodies (Rodwell 2001, 39–50, 55–60, and 75–85). Furthermore, just because the poem is explicit in referring to architecture does not rule out the possibility that the natural geology of cave systems might have inspired such a description to the Early Medieval mind: before the invention of geology we should not presume that a simple division between ‘nature’ and ‘human-made’ structures was readily apprehended for prehistoric and early historic communities (see Bradley 1998).

Equally important is to recognize that *Beowulf* uses the Old English words *hlaw* and *beorg* interchangeably and both might refer to ‘burial mounds’ (Semple 2013, 158). However, these words need not imply an exclusive funerary function to earthworks given this attribution (e.g. Thompson 2004, 106; Hines 2008, 64). Therefore the use of these terms in no way implies an exclusive comprehension of the dragon’s barrow as a funerary monument. Furthermore, Semple (2013, 144–5) notes *Beowulf* uses the distinctive term *boga* (stone-bows/vaults) suggesting a specific understanding of this structure that differs from other earthen and stone mounds.

Once we remove the Neolithic straightjacket on our interpretations, it becomes clear that broadly contemporary church stone-built architecture of the late seventh to eleventh centuries AD, itself drawing materials and inspiration from Roman stonework, provides equally close parallels and likely inspiration for the poet’s account of the dragon’s mound. Owen-Crocker (2000, 62) explicitly notes that the description of the stone barrow equates to a seventh- to ninth-century AD semi-subterranean or subterranean mausoleum, oratory or baptistery, but does not pursue the full implications of this possibility. Stone-built mausolea and crypts are known from the seventh century AD, famously at Ripon and Hexham (e.g. Bidwell 2010), but the ‘stone arches above firm columns’ (line 2718: Owen-Crocker 2000, 62) might allude to mortuary chapels and crypts that may have

originally been free-standing structures like the multi-phased eighth- and ninth-century AD crypt from Repton (Figure 5.1) (Taylor 1987; Owen-Crocker 2000, 64) or the sunken-featured two-cell structure excavated at Repton to the west of the church and interpreted as a Middle Anglo-Saxon mortuary chapel converted into an Early Viking Age ossuary (Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2001, 67–9). These hypogeal chambers could be megalithic, often comprised of reused Roman stone as in the crypt at Hexham (e.g. Bidwell 2010) as well as

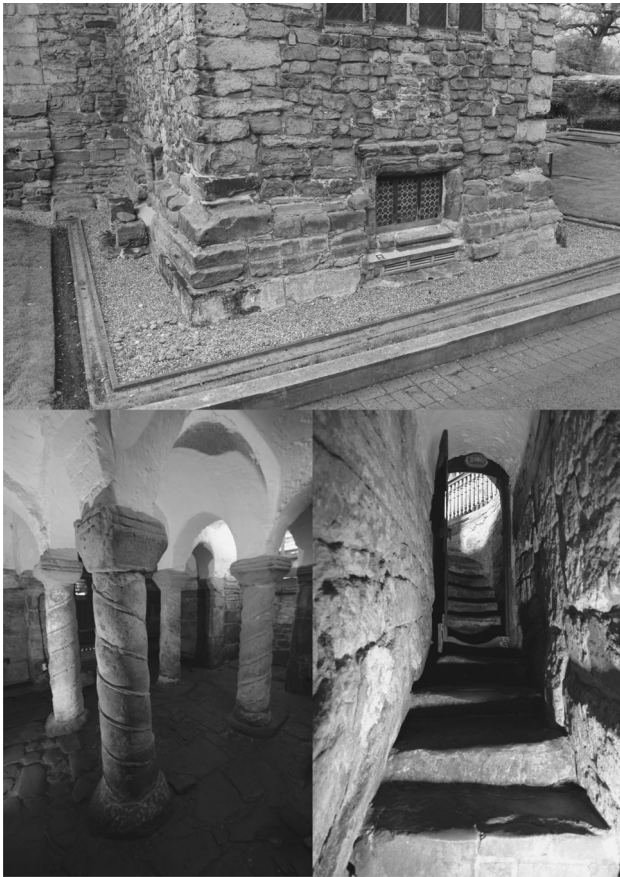


Figure 5.1. Three views of the eighth- to ninth-century AD crypt at Repton (Derbyshire, East Midlands, England), originally a free-standing baptistery and subsequently converted to a mortuary chapel for royal burial. Photographs by Howard Williams.

incorporating columns, lintel stones and vaults like those described in the poem (Taylor 1987; Biddle and Kjølbye-Biddle 2001).

The implied presence of water might be a further hint that the dragon's mound has multiple sources of inspiration, invoking either a natural cave or else a subterranean baptistery like that suggested for the pre-crypt phase of the structure at Repton (Taylor 1987) rather than a megalithic tomb built upon the ancient ground surface. Notably, the poem describes the dragon's barrow as the site of Beowulf's death and embarkation point for his funeral, but before this also a site where Beowulf is washed. Wiglaf somehow had ample water to hand in order to cleanse Beowulf's dying body on the stone seat outside the barrow's entrance (lines 272–3). This might resonate with, and invert, the preparation of Christian bodies outside the portal of a church, or perhaps the washing of pilgrims seeking miraculous healing prior to their descent into a crypt to encounter the relics of saints. Whether mausolea or oratories—a special sort of burial place for the very special dead and for royalty—are being alluded to, the key point is that this is not simply another form of 'grave' (cf. Owen-Crocker 2000, 64). The hypogeum in the poem is an inhabited space of the dragon and a treasury, the inverse of places of pilgrimage and prayer in which the relics of the holy and other treasures are kept. Indeed, it might be entertained that the poem is reflecting a broader obsession with tombs and shrines as inhabited spaces in later Anglo-Saxon England, possibly drawing off pre-Christian concepts of the elite dead as resident in their tombs as well as contemporary engagements with the relics of saints (Williams 2011b; see also Williams forthcoming).

Old English poetry is regarded by Hines (2008) as 'persistently idealistic rather than realistic' and it is perhaps a distraction to (a) expect to find a precise parallel in terms of location, form and materiality to the dragon's barrow in the archaeological record and (b) interpret it in relation to any one category of archaeological monument. Yet the poetry is grounded in the world that was inhabited and experienced (Hines 2008, 70). In short, one cannot help entertain the possibility that the dragon's mound was portrayed as counterpoised with shrines and mausolea as much as the halls suggested by Semple (2013). Furthermore, as an inhabited space, but without a body, there is also the potential of allusion to Christ's tomb, insofar as the megalithic space is a sign of miraculous ascension, or at least, in broader terms, a witness onto God's instrumental design for the world.

THE TREASURE'S MATERIALITY

Webster (2000, 58) rightly states that the treasure in *Beowulf* is not a 'fossil memory of a Dark Age treasure' but instead a 'virtual treasure' operating as a moral concept (Webster 2000, 59). I would take this argument further in two ways, by suggesting that the treasure was not primarily funerary but counter-funerary (cf. Owen-Crocker 2000, 118) and that the treasure was more than an idea: its materiality and biography were central to the narrative of *Beowulf*.

There is nothing in the poem to suggest a funerary deposit per se. Wiglaf sees 'wall-hangings that were a wonder to behold,/glittering gold spread across the ground [. . .] packed with goblets and vessels from the past, tarnished, and corroding. Rusty helmets/all eaten away. Armbands everywhere,/artfully wrought' (lines 2758–63). Archaeologists have again created a typological straightjacket here, assuming a direct connection to furnished princely chamber-graves like Mound 1 at Sutton Hoo (see Williams 2011b). The plurality of artefacts does not imply selection for the grave, it is instead the opposite: an entire treasury that comprises all the trappings of a secular hall and all of its occupants. Moreover, the hoard is deposited not to mourn a dead individual but as the accumulated inheritance of an entire people (line 2235), who, through war, 'one by one [. . .] went down to death, leaving the joys of the hall' (lines 2249–52). Also, it is oppositional to a funerary scene: the artefacts are deposited as an act of mourning but without any ceremony mentioned. Rather than a public funeral as received by Beowulf himself, the treasure is consigned by a solitary individual present—the Last Survivor—who builds the mound specifically for the purpose of containing the treasure. The final piece of conclusive evidence is that no bodies were transported, dressed and decked with the artefacts. Indeed, like the hoard in Grendel's mere and Hrothgar's empty hall Heorot when deserted following Grendel's attack (lines 164–9, 412), the artefacts imply multiple absent bodies. Hence, the Lay of the Last Survivor is not a funeral, not even an auto-funeral, but a cenotaphic counter-funeral and the barrow becomes a counter-tomb: a failed mausoleum.

I wonder whether the words of Wiglaf also define the hoard as opposition to the joys of the lord's hall or contemporary shrine when he says 'I have been inside and seen everything/amassed in the vault. I managed to enter/although no great welcome awaited me under the earthwall' (lines 3087–90). Wiglaf here did not receive the accustomed

greeting of a stranger at the threshold of a living lord's hall or active church, as Beowulf did when he visited Hrothgar in Heorot (lines 389–490), instead he received no welcome.

Stored, chthonic, and inactive, the treasure is prevented by its curse from re-entering circulation and subsequently only following the dragon's death could it serve to honour Beowulf's passing. Thus, once we strip the poem of the tenacious grip of princely graves, we can allow the treasure to tell a different story: it is a collective cenotaphic memorial to a lost people and their lost halls and absent graves as much as to the 'windswept hearthstone' (line 2457). It thus becomes an inactive, cursed and guarded cache. As such, the treasure is oppositional to the ideal of lordly life in the hall and a vibrant church, but it is simultaneously the result of a counter-funeral in the sense that it was rendered inoperable for exchange, display and honouring the dead.

The fundamental point is that this is an empty tomb, like Christ's prior to His burial and following His ascent, but in this case, rather than a departed body, this treasure is awaiting a new body. In other words the funerary associations were yet to be fulfilled because of its hoarding and only acquired following the death of the dragon in relation to Beowulf's own death and funeral. Beowulf's 'bone house' (line 3147) is burnt and the treasure joins him; the body-less treasure and the treasure-less body are at this final stage of the poem conjoined in Beowulf's barrow. Thus, the treasure is key in creating a new 'house' for gold, 'useless to men as ever it was' (lines 3166–8). Both treasure and Beowulf 'had reached the end of the road/through the life they had been lent' (lines 2843–4): the treasure becomes a device for mourning and remembrance.

In summary, I contend that the dragon's treasure is not being portrayed as primarily funerary, but instead has a biography of successive significances, starting as counter-funerary and leading up to its final funerary reuse in the composition of Beowulf's own burial mound and obsequies. While the play on Christ's empty tomb would have been recognized for a Christian audience, this tomb goes through many stages of use. First, it is a cache in a chamber, then the antithesis of an oratory or crypt containing holy relics, the opposite of gifts selected to honour the dead at a high-status funeral and antithetical to the treasures on display in a lord's hall and in church settings.

The direct parallel is with the eighth-century *Life of Saint Guthlac* by Felix, in which we are explicitly told that the chamber within a

mound at Crowland, Lincolnshire, may have been revealed by treasure hunters. Guthlac uses this space to inhabit (Hutton 2009, 11; Semple 2013, 149–53). In this sense, the dragon's mound is the antithesis of the hermit's place of habitation which subsequently becomes his chapel and burial place but the relationship comes from it being a sign of antiquity and miraculous action. They both constitute caches for treasure, then residences for dangerous beasts and devils, then arenas for heroic combat against these monsters, and then a setting for the hero's death and burial. Thus, the mound in the *Life of Saint Guthlac* runs a parallel course to the monument biography of the dragon's mound in *Beowulf* and the focus on *dying* rather than death itself. The secular appearance of the artefacts described might seem to contradict the idea of the crypt as parallel, yet I contend that in the later Anglo-Saxon landscape, subterranean and semi-subterranean mausolea and oratories as well as lord's halls were likely places to find stores of treasures. It was for this very reason that Viking raiders found royal villas and monasteries so profitable for pillage from the late eighth century AD.

THE DRAGON'S MATERIALITY

The dragon is the third component of the burial mound, a monstrous flying and fire-breathing creature described as a 'sky-roamer' (line 2830), 'sky-winger' (line 2314) and a 'fire-dragon' (line 2333). Yet primarily the beast is described as a watchful but sleeping subterranean resident and guardian. For Anglo-Saxon literature in general, Semple outlines the association of Old English *draugr* with mounds and treasure, but also clefts and other subterranean spaces that together she regards as hellish and wild, associated with exile and torment, but also concepts of the 'heathen' (the godless) (Semple 2013, 153, 178–9). In the poem, the dragon is 'the burning one who hunts out barrows' (line 2272), repeatedly described in relation to its subterranean presence near, but not upon, the treasure: as the 'guardian of the mound' (line 2302), 'hoard-watcher' (line 2303), 'cave-guard' (line 2525), 'mound-keeper' (line 2580), 'hoard-guard' (line 2594), 'barrow-dweller' (line 2841) and 'treasure-minder' (line 3133). The beast dominates the dark (line 2212) and only appears to cause fiery aerial destruction at night. Thus the dragon is a thief of sorts: the keeper of

the mound is an uninvited resident and guardian for over three centuries, not the rightful owner of the treasure (line 2278). In searching for the treasure, the dragon encircles the mound's exterior (line 2296).

Yet the dragon is also an agent of death, seeking vengeance on those bound to the act of disturbing the treasure. The dragon's fiery breath and poisonous bite enact the first of two 'cremations' that Beowulf endures: the hero is consumed by fire through his skin and blood twice over; by dragon and by pyre. This duality is paralleled with the deposition of artefacts upon the pyre and in the mound built in Beowulf's honour.

Upon death, the dragon disappears, only to appear later to be hauled out of the mound and tipped over the nearby sea-cliff (lines 3118–20). Its corpse is an embodiment of the sinner's soulless cadaver; its fate worthy of a 'heathen' burial placed on the boundaries of territories and upon the foreshore (Reynolds 2009; Semple 2013, 195–203). It is also reminiscent of the fate of the 'pagan' inhabitants of Sussex (as described by the Venerable Bede) who in famine cast themselves over cliffs (Sherley-Price 1990, 226). Cliffs are thus a cursed place for heathen burial and dishonourable treatment of the unsaved dead.

Semple (2013, 145) notes a small selection of place-names that show that a connection between dragons and barrows was being mapped out in select parts of Anglo-Saxon England. Reynolds and Langlands (2011) suggest that the Oxfordshire linear earthwork, Grimesditch, and possibly the Uffington White Horse, were also interpreted as dragonsque. *Wyrms* certainly pervaded the Anglo-Saxon world and imagination. As Thompson (2004, 135) succinctly states: 'the dragon in *Beowulf* inhabits an ambiguous moral space: he is powerful and he may be inimical, but he is not diabolical'. Not wholly negative, Thompson suggests that ubiquitous serpentine imagery upon metalwork and sculpture suggests that *wyrmas* might be apotropaic through their intertwining bodies but also their watchfulness (Thompson 2004, 134; see also Williams 2011b). Thompson's study of literary evidence reveals the complex and varied natures of the *wyrm* from maggots to winged serpents, and this ubiquity and diversity is seen in the variety of media—including metalwork and stone sculpture—upon which dragons appear between the seventh and eleventh centuries AD.

Any pre-Christian connotations of the serpent aside, this was a beast that was clearly multivalent and powerful and survived and

expanded its repertoire of use across the conversion period (Hawkes 1997). Catherine Hills (1997, 297) astutely notes that archaeologists tend to focus on the ‘real world’ elements of the poem: ‘No one has tried to dig up Grendel, his mother, or the dragon.’ Still, she goes on to note that the dragon in the poem chimes with the serpentine art of the Early Middle Ages, yet I would suggest this falls short of the potential for archaeology to ‘dig up’ the dragon. Early Medieval zoomorphic art is assumed from this perspective to be simply representations of imaginary monsters. In some instances, however, the art was more than that, the decoration held an agency through its animated, multi-sensory, tactile, and embodied qualities. Animal art afforded real beastly presences on the surfaces of artefacts and architectures, watching, biting, encircling, and hence guarding them as apotropaic and empowering agencies, demonstrating the power, authority, and identities of those commissioning, wielding, and exchanging them (Williams 2011b).

It is from this perspective that we can understand the dragon as more than imaginary beast, but as a key ingredient of the materiality of the stone barrow in *Beowulf*. The dragon’s symbolic ambiguity is manifest on a wide range of stone sculpture from across England. For example, there is an early representation of St Michael slaying the dragon from Stinsford, Dorset (Cramp 2006, 113–14) and the rood screen at Bitton (Gloucestershire) shows a snake beneath the crucified Christ (Bryant 2012, 147–8). On cross-shafts, we have the reptilian beasts on the base of Ramsbury 3 (Wiltshire) dated to the ninth or tenth century AD (Cramp 2006, 230) and the snakes threatening a human figure on two faces (A and C) of the Masham 3 (North Yorkshire) shaft fragment (Lang 2001, 172, pls. 646 and 648).

More overtly commemorative contexts display serpents prominently, including the cross-shaft Sockburn 3A (Cleveland), upon which a serpent looms over a rider holding a bird of prey—perhaps a secular portrait honouring the dead (Cramp 1984, 136–7, pl. 710). Meanwhile the bound serpents from Ryedale: Middleton 1C and 2C (Lang 1984, 181–4, pls. 672, 674, 678, and 680) and Sinnington 3A (Lang 1984, 208, pl. 804), both East Yorkshire, are juxtaposed with images of lordly ideals: seated in his hall or hunting. Two serpents intertwine up the tenth-century cross-shaft (1A) from Lasingham, also East Yorkshire (Lang 1984, 167). The world serpent of Norse mythology is depicted on the tenth-century Gosforth cross (1D), Cumbria (Bailey and Cramp 1988, pls. 305 and 306), and a serpent dripping

poison on Loki also appears on this monument (1C) (Bailey and Cramp 1988, pls. 301 and 304). Together, these examples reveal the serpent as agent of death and destruction, but also prefiguring redemption and resurrection.

Upon grave-slabs of the tenth century AD, we find an overtly mortuary association with serpents guarding the bodies of the dead. As Thompson (2004) shows, dragonesque winged end-beasts frame the crosses on grave-slabs from York Minster (e.g. Minster 35A, 36A, 38A and 39A: Lang 1991, 72–4, pls. 148, 152, 159, and 165; see also Thompson 2003; see also Shrewsbury Saint Mary 3: Bryant 2012, 79–81, 310–11). A weapon-bearing human figure (often identified as the dragon-slayer Sigurð) battles with two serpents on York Minster 34D (Lang 1984, 71–2, pl. 147). Also, serpentine end-beasts adorn some of the tenth-century AD hogback stones—mortuary monuments that embody complex skeuomorphic transformations of architectural spaces—as upon Lythe 25, North Yorkshire (Lang 2001, 162–3, pls. 553 and 556; see also Williams forthcoming), while serpents battle humans on Gosforth hogback 5C (Bailey and Cramp 1988, pl. 327).

While this evidence reveals a range of significances to the dragon upon Anglo-Saxon commemorative stone monuments and architecture, it is sufficient to allow us to rethink the importance of the dragon's lithic habitation in *Beowulf*. We are left with the possibility that the materiality of the stone monument is key to the relationship with, and significance of, the simultaneously chthonic and aerial dragon. As well as secular and sacred artefacts bearing dragon designs such as the Anglian helmet from Coppergate, York (Kitzinger 1993, 4), there are a range of stone sculptures that render serpentine beasts as guardians on the thresholds to holy places, such as the western entrance porch to the church at Monkwearmouth built in AD 674 (Figure 5.2) (Monkwearmouth 8a-b: Cramp 1984, 125–6, pls. 112–13) and its Late Antique funerary chapel predecessor at Poitiers: the *Hypogée des Dunes* (Kitzinger 1993, 4). Hence, serpents could be both threatening and binding architectural forces: Christian representations of the devil and/or guardians of the living and the dead in the medium of stone. At Saint Mary Deerhurst and Saint Oswald's Gloucester, the rare survival of downward- and outward-facing animal heads on label stops and *prokrossos* (projecting hood above the apex of an arch) strongly suggest that protective beasts were widespread features of Anglo-Saxon church architecture, guarding apertures and thresholds (Bryant 2012, 175–85). This theme seems to



Figure 5.2. The late-seventh-century AD serpentine beasts on the western threshold of the Anglo-Saxon monastic church at Monkwearmouth (Tyne and Wear, Northumberland, England). Photograph by Howard Williams.

extend to mortuary monuments with the tenth-century hogback tombs which display both ursine and serpentine beasts (Williams forthcoming).

Important here is the poem's impression that the dragon permeates the stone barrow, coming and going at will and apparently using other entrances to that utilized by the thief, Beowulf, and Wiglaf. Seemingly inhabiting the mound itself, encircling, above and below the chamber, the poem implies the dragon lived beneath the earth but separate from the treasure in some fashion (line 2319). This is evident in the fact that the dragon was not an occupant of the chamber in which the thief found a golden vessel but that the chamber was 'close to his dreaming head' (line 2290). Perhaps it was from the vaults themselves—like the ninth-century beasts label stops around apertures at Deerhurst or the end-beasts upon hogbacks—that the dragon kept watch before he 'rippled down the rock' to discover human footprints of the intruder, suggesting a position on the side or above the chamber (line 2288). The beast

was said to go 'back to the hoard' (line 2319) and to be 'secure/in the vaults of his barrow' (lines 2322–3) but this does not necessarily mean upon or among the hoard itself.

Even in death, the dragon does not appear to reside in the hoard, for Wiglaf does not encounter the serpent's corpse upon re-entering this space (lines 2771–2), despite the beast's body being subsequently found and cast into the sea prior to Beowulf's funeral. Hence, we seem to have implied at least two chambers within the mound, one for the dragon, one for the hoard. Or else, alternatively, when hearing Beowulf's voice, the dragon does not rise up from the floor of the chamber but instead 'the breath of the monster/burst from the rock. There was a rumble underground' (lines 2557–8), implying the dragon was outside the chamber, inside the rock itself, seemingly burrowing worm-like through the stony material of the barrow and over its surfaces. Equally, given the aforementioned hot stream issuing forth from the barrow, the dragon might be seen as a water-beast akin to those Beowulf fought previously in his swim against Breca and once again grappled with in the mere before the fight with Grendel's mother (lines 575, 1425–41, 1510). After all, the dragon ends up being returned to the water after its death and so it is possible that the dragon is conceived as interchangeably a monster of the dark earth, night-time air and subterranean water: a resident of the barrow, not a resident of the chamber alone.

This leads us to speculate as to whether the very idea of the dragon in *Beowulf* derives from serpentine sculpture inscribed upon and guarding the stone portals, pillars, and crosses associated with later Anglo-Saxon halls, churches and (given the discussion thus far) perhaps stone subterranean spaces specifically. After all, these are nothing other than *real* dragons, three-dimensional beasts originally painted in multiple vivid colours that would seem to emerge out of, and moving over, and watch over the spaces and thresholds of churches, chapels, crypts, and tombs. Again, contemporary church architecture might provide a ready inspiration for the dragon's lair, more than any Neolithic chambered tomb.

CONCLUSION

Neolithic megalithic architectures persisted through the Middle Ages as landmarks, attracting burials, names, and other activities.

Yet this chapter argues that it is simplistic, misleading, anachronistic and theoretically stifling to equate the dragon's barrow in *Beowulf* exclusively with Neolithic megalithic architecture. Indeed, the desire to see seventh-century chamber graves reflected in the treasure of the dragon's mound, and to see a Neolithic tomb in its stone architecture, might be seen to be products of a Victorian desire to regard the poem as a 'pagan survival' as well as to see the Anglo-Saxons as Teutonic immigrants supplanting the monuments of the ancient British. Even more so, it is problematic to regard the dragon's mound specifically as a single-phase funerary structure. Instead, the dragon's mound was significant through successive stages of the poem's narrative, a place of loss, a cache, a monstrous dwelling, a place of exile, heroic conflict, death and only then part of the landscape of the hero's funeral whose mound was raised close by. The dragon's mound possessed a biography of uses and reuses that made sense within Early Medieval heroic, but also biblical and hagiographical, literature, making it both a place of infamy and fame, torment, and deliverance. This suggests that, where Neolithic megaliths persisted in the landscape of Early Medieval Europe, they might be apprehended in relation to the experience of building and encountering semi-subterranean and subterranean baptisteries, oratories and mausolea in ecclesiastical landscapes. These were lithic spaces containing treasures and guarded by zoomorphic apotropaic art. The stone barrow portrayed in *Beowulf* is framed as contrapuntal to the architectures of the royal and holy dead as much as the halls of lords (Semple 2013, 143–92).

This reappraisal of the dragon's mound in *Beowulf* challenges overly simplistic readings of the archaeological and literary biographies of megalithic monuments in Early Medieval Europe and promotes the need for contextual engagements with contemporary architectures (those built and still in use during the seventh to eleventh centuries AD) to draw interpretations that account for the varied and complex material engagements and perceptions of Neolithic tombs in later landscapes. The biography of the dragon's mound in the poem is indeed outstanding, for the very reason that it is not primarily a Neolithic megalithic tomb, but possesses a literary biography counterpoised with a nexus of stone architectures—ancient and ruined, recent and intact, experienced and encountered—in the Early Medieval landscape.

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Myth, Memento, and Memory

Avebury (Wiltshire, England)

David Wheatley

‘When you’re building your own creation,
Nothing’s better than real than a real imitation’

(Aimee Mann, 1995)

BIOGRAPHY, MEMORY, AND MEMENTO

In Christopher Nolan’s film *Memento* (Nolan 2000), Leonard Shelby—played by Guy Pearce—suffers from anterograde amnesia, which prevents him from generating any new memories. To deal with this, he creates material traces such as Polaroid photographs and notes and he tattoos the most significant facts onto his body. Each time he awakes, he encounters these *mementos* (notes, images, and tattoos) and must interpret them in order to decide what to do next. He sometimes leaves messages for himself, intended to constrain his future behaviour, but while these messages effect his actions, some of the notes or photos may be lost or destroyed, or he may fail to realize that they have been manipulated or altered. Further, he may not interpret them correctly, so that his actions are not what he intended. Despite his amnesia, however, the past is always implicated in Leonard’s story and it is always changing his future.

In some sense, the way that Leonard leaves mementos for himself is a more interesting model for the way that successive human

communities encounter the remains of the past than the idea of biographies. Just as on Leonard's tattooed body, traces of the past such as earthworks and monuments are inscribed onto the landscape, yet oral tradition cannot transmit the detailed meanings of those traces or the intentions of their creators through long sequences of time so that human communities encountering them later are, metaphorically, amnesiacs. Sometimes earthworks and monuments are built with the intention of projecting a particular world-view, constraining future generations to act in particular ('correct') ways. Over long periods, however, oral traditions distort, people move away and areas are occupied by new inhabitants with no cultural memory of those intentions or meanings. Just as with Leonard's tattoos, monuments become *mementos* that have to be interpreted and situated within a contemporary understanding of the world before meaningful action is possible.

If we think of both Leonard's tattoos and the physical traces of the past as *mementos*, then it's worth thinking how these differ from *memories*. For Leonard, it is the non-specific nature of the memento and its failure reliably to communicate his intentions and beliefs that make the difference. If he had memories, his knowledge about the past would be less ambiguous, and his intentions could be retained and (at least partly) understood by his future self. While monuments and earthworks clearly do not achieve this over long timescales, we might see the creation and distribution of texts as the equivalent of forming memories because they store such a detail about the world-view and intentions of the writer that they can be thought of as a step change in the transmission of ideas and intentions through generations.

PREHISTORIC MEMENTOS

Avebury is at the same time a village and also one of the largest and best-known prehistoric henge monuments in Britain (Figures 6.1 and 6.2). More than these, however, it might be seen—like the tattoos on Leonard's body—as a palimpsest of physical traces whose sequence we may now have partly decoded, but whose deeper meanings are far harder to comprehend.

A detailed description of the prehistoric elements of the site (apart from the Beckhampton Avenue whose existence was not conclusively

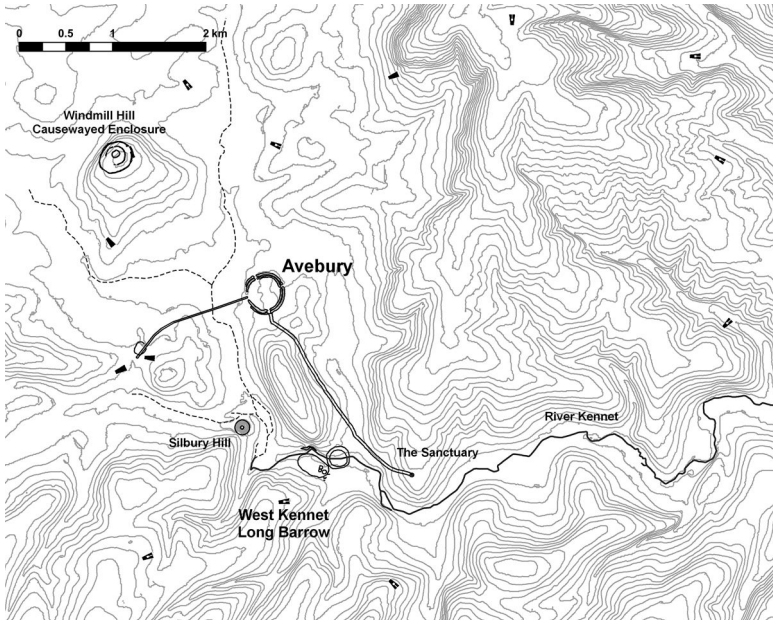


Figure 6.1. Avebury in relation to nearby monuments of the earlier and later Neolithic. Map by David Wheatley.

demonstrated until 1999) can be found in Smith (1965), with more recent discussions in (among others) Pitts and Whittle (1992), Pollard and Reynolds (2002), Gillings and Pollard (2004), Gillings et al. (2008). Although there are several documented features of the monument that are not well understood (see e.g. Ucko et al. 1991), the principal elements of prehistoric Avebury are (1) a ditch around 21 metres wide and 11 metres deep with an external bank forming an enclosure some 425 metres in diameter with four causeways; (2) a circle of large sarsen stone uprights, originally numbering some ninety-eight stones, set just inside the ditch; (3) a southern inner circle around 52 metres diameter, consisting of about twenty-nine stones that surrounded a small stone setting that included ‘the obelisk’, which may have been more than 6 metres long; (4) a similar northern inner circle surrounding at a ‘cove’ (three large stones forming an open box); (5) an avenue of stones leading about 2.5 kilometres from the southern entrance to a smaller stone and timber circle—the Sanctuary—on Overton Hill and (6) a second avenue of stones leading from the



Figure 6.2. The south-western sector of Avebury showing the ditch and bank, and the stone settings (mostly re-erected by Alexander Keiller). Parts of the contemporary village and the tower of the church can also be seen. Photograph by David Wheatley.

western entrance at least 1.3 kilometres to a substantial cove (the Longstones) and ditched enclosure at Beckhampton.

Precise dates for construction and use of the various components of the monument complex have yet to be satisfactorily established (Pollard and Cleal 2004) and there is not yet complete agreement about the basic chronology of the monument (see the Appendix of Gillings and Pollard 2004, 192–3). Perhaps the most likely sequence is that the construction of the massive earthworks at Avebury (at least two phases) and also the small enclosure at Longstones probably took place between 2900 and 2650 BC (Pitts and Whittle 1992; Gillings et al. 2008), with the erection of stones beginning in the decades or centuries after that. It is possible that some or all of the stone settings pre-dated the earthworks, although analogy with other monuments, such as Stonehenge, and the limited radiocarbon evidence currently suggests that the earthworks came first. The stones themselves were brought to the site from the nearby Marlborough Downs, where many of them may have been important landmarks or foci for activity in their own right and it is hard not to see the action of assembling these stones together at Avebury as an act partly to do with the

appropriation of previous meanings and place references as part of some wider social and economic process. It is not clear whether this took place in one or more short bursts of activity, or whether there is a longer sequence of continual development in which different elements (the various stone circles and avenues) were added more gradually between, say, 2600 BC and 2000 BC. Beaker burials adjacent to stones of both Avenues are documented, demonstrating continued activity between around 2500 BC and 2100 BC, while deposits of human remains in the ditch and the erection or even re-erection of some stones continue into the Early Bronze Age (Gillings and Pollard 2004).

Whatever the chronology of the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age components of Avebury, there is almost no evidence to suggest that any activities took place at Avebury itself during the Late Bronze or Iron Ages, although the landscape around Avebury clearly remained occupied as shown by the development of field systems and settlements. The Late Bronze Age appears, therefore, to represent a significant point of dislocation in Avebury's story when it appears that Avebury moved from being an active monument to one that was deliberately avoided, perhaps still recognized as a powerful ancestral place but now with some kind of social 'taboo' attached to it (Gillings and Pollard 2004, 85–8).

ROMAN AND SAXON ENCOUNTERS

The construction of a major Roman road passing immediately in front of nearby Silbury Hill appears to have stimulated the development of a significant Romano-British 'roadside settlement' in the late first or early second century AD which, by the fifth century AD, occupied several areas around the Hill (Crosby et al. 2013). This was only around 1.5 kilometres from Avebury and would make an interesting case-study in its own right: the settlement appears to have had different areas, with a possible 'cult' centre to the east of the hill, and more conventional settlement nearby and to the south of the road. Other elements of interest include a possible Late Iron Age temple and a series of wells surrounding the hill, argued to have been part of a wider pattern of the ritual use of wells and shafts in this period (Leary and Field 2010, 163–4), perhaps connected with the nearby springs, although Crosby et al. caution against the uncritical acceptance of a

ritual interpretation (2013, 281). Regardless, the settlement adds to growing evidence for the role played by ancient monuments within Romano-British ritual practices (cf. Williams 1998a).

Residents of this settlement may be responsible for the deposition of Roman coins reported by Stukeley (1743, 26), the Romano-British pottery found in low densities by Keiller (Smith 1965, 243) and Roman material (including a brooch) recovered during Gray's excavation of the ditch (Gray 1935). Gillings and Pollard (2004, 94–5) have suggested that these may be concentrated around entrances and represent intentional deposits, but there is insufficient evidence yet to attribute this securely to ritual activity. Given the relatively small scale of excavations through the ditch at Avebury, it is also not clear how much deposition took place at this time, although there is no evidence for any contemporary settlement within or adjacent to the henge so this material seems to have been deposited either by transient visitors or those working the land, whether their motivation was functional, votive or some combination of the two.

It is not until the Saxon period that Avebury appears to re-emerge as a place that can be frequented and occupied with the development of a Saxon village immediately outside the western entrance. That Avebury should have been 'reactivated' during the Saxon period should no longer be a surprise, given the considerable range of evidence for Saxon reuse of ancient remains (see e.g. Williams 1998b) and Semple (2003) has argued that the Avebury area may have become a fluctuating frontier region during the seventh and eighth centuries AD. By the ninth century AD, perhaps beginning as an offshoot of the Romano-British settlement to the south (Gillings and Pollard 2004, 105–6), there was a well-established village adjacent to the remains of the henge (Reynolds 2001), with a central street ('herepath') running east–west through the henge and, by around AD 1000, a substantial church had been constructed. There is no record of how the standing stones of the monument were understood at this time, and Gillings and Pollard even suggest that they 'may have been disregarded, their presence perhaps ascribed to "natural" rather than human agency' (2004, 101). However, this seems in danger of taking the absence of evidence as evidence of absence given that a significant proportion of the stone settings must have still been standing at this time (we can be reasonably sure of this because many stones were, or had recently been, standing when Stukeley visited in the 1720s and a high proportion of excavated stones have

proved to have been buried or burned during the Medieval and post-Medieval period). We do know that the earthworks were ascribed a name: *waledich* ('ditch of the Britons'), which—as Pollard and Reynolds (2002, 203) observe—implies that they were interpreted both as anthropomorphic and as pertaining in some way to previous inhabitants, although not that they were known to be of significant antiquity. Given that there is now a wealth of evidence for Anglo-Saxon use and understanding of prehistoric mounds and barrows (see e.g. Semple 1998, Williams 1998b) and that a number of prehistoric monuments were ascribed (at least by name) to the mythical past—examples include 'Wayland's Smithy' and 'Adam's Grave' long barrows—it seems plausible that the same could be true of the various visible stone components of Avebury at this time. Regardless, the social 'taboo' that apparently restricted settlement in or possibly even passage through the monument in later prehistory had apparently lapsed. By the ninth century AD, then, Avebury seems to have been suitable for frequentation and for occupation adjacent to the henge, although the position of the church and settlement outside the henge, rather than inside where it could have made use of the defensive potential of the existing earthworks, has been interpreted by some as evidence that there remained some strong social prohibition (Burl 1979, 33).

BURIAL OF STONES IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Avebury appears to have continued to be a prosperous village, as it appears in the Domesday Book of 1086, by which time the church had been considerably extended (Freeman 1983). More interestingly, the settlement area appears to have extended eastwards inside the henge itself, with buildings constructed along the street that passed between the eastern and western entrances. By the fourteenth century AD, a manor house had become established in the village, north-west of the church yet, despite a rich historical archive relating to ecclesiastical or social aspects of Avebury at this time (Gillings and Pollard 2004, 113–16), there are no written records that relate to beliefs or practices involving the stones.

This historical silence stands in marked contrast to the archaeological record which shows repeated evidence for the burial of stones

at Avebury. This practice was thoroughly documented by Keiller during excavations in the 1930s within the henge itself and on the West Kennet Avenue (Smith 1965) and also on the Beckhampton Avenue during excavations between 1999 and 2004 (Gillings et al. 2008). So many stones at Avebury are buried, in fact, that later surveyors could use metal probes to locate them and map their distributions. Keiller's work in the south-western sector of the henge revealed that fifteen of twenty-two stones had been buried although that proportion may have been lower on the West Kennet Avenue, where fifteen of sixty-five stones were found to be buried (Smith 1965) and at Beckhampton (Gillings et al. 2008) where three of the eight avenue stones investigated were buried in this way (one is shown in Figure 6.3).

The practice appears to involve a relatively consistent range of methods, although with some variation in specific approach (Gillings et al. 2008, 269–75). Documented examples of stone burials reveal how the activity generally consisted of the digging of a burial pit close to the stone's existing position. This was cut with sufficient depth for the stone to lie well below the ground surface and with horizontal dimensions carefully designed to match the stone. This



Figure 6.3. One of the buried stones of the Beckhampton Avenue with—in section to the right—part of the prehistoric stone hole. Photograph by David Wheatley.

was followed by the toppling (if upright) or manoeuvring (if fallen) of the stone into the burial pit before it was sealed with chalk rubble and the surface levelled. Precise dating of these events remains difficult because only four burial pits have produced any reliable dating evidence. The most interesting remains stone 9, where an individual was buried beneath a stone with artefacts that suggest he was a professional 'barber-surgeon' and coins of the early fourteenth century AD. Gillings (Gillings et al. 2008, 279) concludes that stone burial was probably episodic and that it took place from at least that time to the sixteenth/seventeenth centuries AD. Explanations for the practice have included the clearance of land prior to ploughing, although this has been largely discounted by Keiller and subsequent workers on various grounds including that there would have been far more efficient ways to clear many of these stones (such as toppling or rolling them into the ditch) and at least some appear to have been in areas of pasture at the time. As Keiller, Gillings, and others have pointed out it is also very hard to imagine why a 'barber surgeon', carrying both money and his tools, would be engaged in agricultural field clearance. More likely, the practice had some religious or symbolic dimension based in the repression of 'non-approved' religious practices or—as Gillings (Gillings et al. 2008, 278) suggests—as a socially consistent response to folklore beliefs about the origins of the stones. However, it is possible that too much attention has been placed on the *motivation* for stone burial in this period. There is no good reason to suppose that the motivation was identical in each case, rather they may have been widely different depending on the spatial or temporal context of the event while the practice remained fairly constant. In short, the practice may be consistent because there was a 'right' way to dispose of a stone, whatever the reason.

THE (EARLY MODERN) HEAT IS ON

From the mid seventeenth century AD there is both historical and archaeological evidence for a new practice of stone destruction at Avebury. This practice varied in specific details but involved heating stones in a fire and then fracturing them into smaller sized stones using water (inducing rapid-cooling fractures) and percussion. The documentary evidence for this is dominated by the drawings, writings

and notes of William Stukeley, who visited and documented Avebury during the early 1720s, subsequently publishing his account of the monument as one of the most influential works of antiquarian archaeology (Stukeley 1743). Stukeley's is not the only antiquarian or historical account of Avebury (Ucko et al. 1991), but the detail and depth of his record is an order of magnitude greater than any other early scholar. Among his most famous and frequently reproduced drawings is a depiction he describes as *An Abury atto da fe, May 20 1724*, which shows a stone engulfed by a huge conflagration with long wooden levers protruding from beneath it (Figure 6.4). Stukeley reports that teams of men would lever up the stones using such levers to prop up the stone on boulders to enable a fire to be set underneath in a prepared fire-pit (Stukeley 1743, 16), although archaeological evidence demonstrates that the precise methods were quite varied (Gillings et al. 2008, 329–32). Standing around the stone are five figures with long-handled implements (apparently used to manipulate the fire) and sledgehammers, and a pile of smaller stones is shown to the left of the fire. The archaeological evidence is, in many ways, just as graphic. Stone burning has been documented at many of the investigations of the monument, most recently at the Beckhampton Avenue, where fire-pits containing charcoal and burned sarsen



Figure 6.4. William Stukeley's drawing of an *atto da fe*. Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS Gough Maps 231, fol. 5.

relating to the destruction of nine stones were documented (Gillings et al. 2008). These included the most substantial example of a sarsen burning pit recorded to date, apparently representing the demise of one of the—presumably very substantial—stones of the former Longstones Cove (Gillings et al. 2008, 310–11).

The explanation of these acts is more plausibly economic than for the earlier practice of stone burial, and it can reasonably be interpreted as something of a local industry. There is no doubt, for example, that stone from the breaking events was used to construct local buildings and walls and the fire-manipulation tools drawn by Stukeley do not appear to be modified agricultural tools, suggesting that the practice may have been common enough to have developed a bespoke toolset. There is also a possibility that the practice may at times have been an act of resistance by non-conformists during periods of intense repression (Gillings et al. 2008, 345–8), although the association that implies between the stones and the established Church is not unproblematic. Stukeley specifically names some of the individuals he claims were responsible for acts of stone destruction in the early eighteenth century AD, although the practice must have been much more widespread than he implies, and his motives for naming particular members of the local agrarian elite may be far more complex than were formerly appreciated (Gillings et al. 2008, 341). As for stone burial, then, it may be that the relatively consistent technology of destruction masks a variety of motives at different times and in different places. Once again, the social practice of stone burning may have been more constant, reproduced by repetition as a ‘traditional’ practice, than the reasons for engaging in the practice.

THE MYTH OF THE ‘REAL’ AVEBURY

Despite the numerous archaeological investigations, and the considerable level of understanding that has been achieved, the size and complexity of this stone and earthwork monument can seem as inexplicable today as when Stukeley documented the site in the 1720s. Stukeley’s reputation as a keen observer has survived subsequent campaigns of fieldwork (Smith 1965; Gillings et al. 2008) substantially untarnished: although he was clearly neither a passive or objective fieldworker, so his records cannot be treated uncritically, his

drawings and writings continue to provide a valuable source of evidence that can be understood when their historical and social context is properly considered. By contrast, the interpretative framework he presents for Avebury—replete with Druids and a kind of ‘proto-Christianity’—holds little influence over current scientific interpretations of Avebury’s prehistoric past, dismissed by twentieth-century archaeologists as a kind of late-period lunacy (Piggott 1935; 1985) before being reconsidered within its proper historical context (Haycock 2002; Hutton 2005) in which it is clearly far more reasonable.

Stukeley’s legacy, however, has arguably had far more impact on the subsequent history of the monument than either his field records or his interpretation. This is because his work embodies the idea that there was a single, perfect moment in the past in which Avebury was in some sense ‘complete’. While this idea may have been rational to Stukeley in his early-Enlightenment context, lacking the necessary temporal framework for prehistory and also needing to incorporate his religious ideology, even the highly simplified account above should reveal that there never was a single, complete, Avebury. The view that Avebury was constructed to a preconceived plan and overseen by a single individual (Stukeley’s ‘Arch Druid’) cannot be sustained by the archaeological evidence. Even if we arbitrarily restrict our interest in Avebury to its prehistory, the archaeological remains are a palimpsest resulting from a project executed over hundreds or thousands of years perhaps episodically but certainly in several phases. Stukeley’s idealized Avebury, most clearly manifested in the famous frontispiece to *Abury, a Temple of the British Druids* (Figure 6.5), is therefore a myth, representing Stukeley’s desire to disentangle the *authentic* Avebury from the physical one he encountered. Gillings and Pollard put this well:

Stukeley’s Abury became a canonical text for students of the site—the definitive record from which interpretations emerged, and against which claims were, and [...] still are, evaluated.

(Gillings and Pollard forthcoming)

Stukeley’s concept of a single, authentic, Avebury was perfectly rational in its own historical context, and it must have influenced John Lubbock, then president of the Royal Anthropological Society, who bought part of the Avebury estate in 1871 in order to protect the

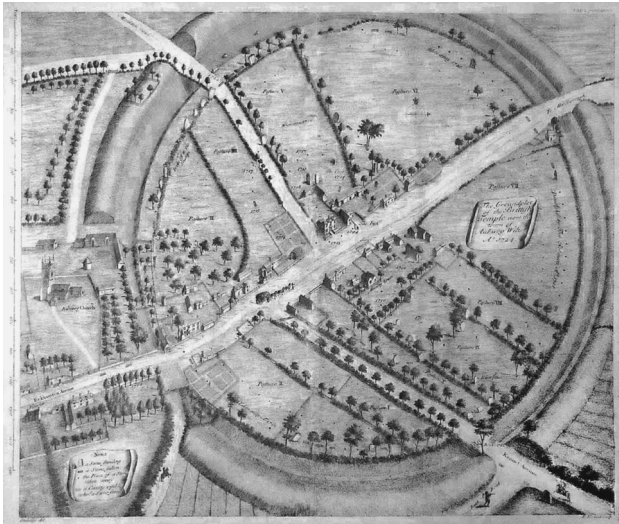


Figure 6.5. William Stukeley's 'canonical' Avebury and Alexander Keiller's prototype: the frontispiece from *Abury, a Temple of the British Druids*, 1743.

site from further development (he later also purchased Silbury Hill). Lubbock, a pupil of Charles Darwin (Thompson 1990), would go on to introduce Britain's first Ancient Monuments Protection Act in 1882, by which Avebury was granted its first legal protection from further modification. Stukeley's (stylized, if not fictional) tale of the destruction of Avebury at the hands of a greedy agrarian elite must have provided a convenient narrative backdrop to the contemporary plans to construct further buildings inside the henge, just as the true depth of the prehistoric past was starting to become clear, at least to the educated elite to which Lubbock belonged.

A few years later, however, Stukeley seems to have had little influence on Harold St George Gray, who conducted excavations on behalf of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (Gray 1935). He focused on trying empirically to demonstrate the true antiquity of Avebury by cutting sections through the ditch. Although he did investigate some stone settings, Gray shows remarkably little concern with the stone settings or Stukeley, who is mentioned alongside several other sources, and there is no sense in which he appears to have been seeking an 'original' prehistoric form of the monument in the sense of Stukeley.

Stukeley's mythical Avebury may have continued to fade into the past had it not been for its subsequent influence on Alexander Keiller. Keiller purchased nearby Windmill Hill in 1924 and excavated there until 1929 (Smith 1965; Whittle et al. 1999) when he was badly injured in a car accident, but he had also purchased many of Stukeley's original manuscripts in a private sale in 1924 and (with O.G.S Crawford) studied them intently. In 1933 he decided to purchase Avebury itself in order to excavate the site and—perhaps more significantly—to 'restore' it, an ambitious aim feasible only because Keiller was heir to a substantial fortune made in the marmalade industry.

Keiller's project was to restore Avebury to what he considered to be its 'original' form, essentially the authentic single-phase 'temple' myth created by Stukeley but 'ground truthed' by his own excavations. Between 1934 and 1939, he conducted excavations on the northern part of the West Kennet Avenue and then within the henge itself, transforming parts of the monument by re-erecting and reconstructing stones where he found them. Where he could not re-erect or reconstruct stones, he erected concrete obelisks to mark the positions of former stones. His excavations were carefully targeted on identifying the former positions of the stones, and the restoration was dramatic in some parts of the monument: before his work, only three standing and nine fallen stones were visible on the West Kennet Avenue; by the time he had finished there were over twenty-five stones upright and numerous concrete obelisks. In two quadrants of the henge he had a similar impact re-erecting or marking dozens of stones until those parts of the monument, like the West Kennet Avenue, closely resembled his idealized model. Keiller did not restrict his project to the archaeology: he also arranged and financed the demolition of several buildings and businesses in an attempt to remove the village from the interior of the henge. It should be noted that—despite this general approach—Keiller was an extremely thorough and effective excavator, and the written and drawn record he left (admittedly for others to publish) is of a very high quality.

Keiller's project was truncated in 1939 by the onset of the Second World War and by his dwindling finances, but by that time it had had the effect of fossilizing Stukeley's ideal of Avebury into stone and concrete. Parts of the monument were utterly transformed from archaeological *remains*, embodying the effects of successive periods of engagement and reinterpretation of the monument, into an archaeological *reconstruction* of the monument at one mythical moment

in the past. This has had several effects on the subsequent trajectory of Avebury's management and interpretation.

No further excavations of any significant scale have taken place within the henge since 1939. Some work has been done in advance of development or (rarer) with very specific research questions in mind and there have been earthwork and geophysical surveys, but the only subsequent excavation of any scale has taken place beyond the henge itself. It is arguable that this is a very positive outcome, particularly in comparison to Stonehenge where a large proportion of the monument was excavated, but it is also largely responsible for the uncertainty surrounding the dating and phasing of the henge.

Keiller sold the monument to the National Trust in 1943, but the process he set in motion of selectively removing 'modern' structures continued for a further two decades, with a new village to the west constructed to house those displaced by the policy which offered new, more modern housing but also separated people from the existing village centre. In retrospect, it is hard to see this as anything but a kind of 'ethnic cleansing' of the monument motivated by a combination of social housing and misguided conservation ideals, and which has resulted in a very profound social divide in the region.

LIVES, AFTERLIVES, MEMENTOS, AND MEMORIES

Ironically, Avebury serves to undermine the central concept of this volume and at the same time reinforce its importance. I have argued that monuments such as Avebury do not have 'lives' at all, but they form a chain of mementos. Lives also imply births, yet Avebury does not have a clearly defined beginning that could be interpreted as such. The arrival of the first stone at Avebury is not a start in any sense as it is probable that the (multi-phase) earthwork had already been constructed by that time and even if we choose to define, say, a single of the stone elements at Avebury as some kind of 'start', we also need to recognize that there was almost certainly no predetermined plan for the monument so that it may have always been a work in progress (Barrett 1994). Moreover, many of the sarsen stones which were erected at Avebury must have had previous 'lives' in their former positions on the Marlborough Downs, where they may have functioned as meeting places, campsites or landmarks. Large sarsen stones are highly

unusual in both form and size, so that during the Mesolithic and earliest Neolithic they would surely 'be considered objects of awe and wonder and perhaps foster supernatural explanations. Repeated visits might result in the development of legend and mythology about what the sarsens are and how they came into being' (Field 2005, 89).

While it challenges the pervasive idea that monuments have a life, Avebury also reinforces the importance of the long-term histories of prehistoric monuments. Rather than 'life' or 'afterlife', we should think of Avebury as a series of mementos. Like Leonard's tattoos, the physical remains of a monument such as Avebury required a response when encountered by the amnesiac communities of later periods, and each of the physical traces at Avebury can be seen as part of a chain reaction that has echoed down the *longue durée*, provoking distinct responses in each generation of humans who were forced to interpret it, compelled to incorporate the compound traces within their available cosmological framework. Some of these encounters have left very little physical trace, while others have compounded or confounded the natural processes of erosion and decay to profoundly alter the physicality of Avebury, and leave a new memento for subsequent generations of human encounters.

It is not a new observation that Avebury is a palimpsest that embodies successive reinterpretations by successive generations of human inhabitants, or that it requires us to consider how the material remains of the past may have been incorporated into the social and economic lives of inhabitants over very long tracts of time. Stukeley's engagement with Avebury, however, generated a text of such clarity and persistence that it may represent something genuinely new in this chain. Rather than another *memento*, Stukeley's drawings and text are so detailed and specific that we might think of them as constituting a *memory*. Stukeley's intentions—albeit filtered through later sensibilities—were available to future generations in a way that the intentions of the generations of previous people who encountered Avebury were not. As if this was not powerful enough, Stukeley's vision collided with Keiller's money in the 1930s, allowing Stukeley's idea of Avebury to be reincorporated into the physical structure of the monument itself. Visitors to Avebury today are presented with what Gillings and Pollard refer to as a 'facsimile' (2004, 183), which has the effect of pervading the public imagination with the idea that the site was once complete, perhaps the work of a 'king' or 'chief' in some unnamed period of the later Neolithic or Bronze Age, an idea that has been

extremely difficult for generations of museum curators and other archaeologists to dislodge. It also brings the metaphor that began this chapter full circle: if pre-literate encounters with Avebury can be considered as a series of mementos left for future generations to interpret, and Stukeley may be considered more like the first true memory of the monument, then the actions of Keiller effectively created a memento from a memory, further complicating the task of interpretation and disentanglement.

The point of this (very stretched) metaphor is not to argue that biographical approaches are worthless, because there is obvious merit in understanding the life trajectories of objects and monuments, but to draw attention to the *differences* between biographies, which proceed in large part using memory, and the trajectories of monuments such as Avebury, which were successively forgotten and rediscovered, at least until Stukeley's intervention. Acknowledging that the lives of monuments may be more usefully considered in this way as a palimpsest of mementos, encountered by 'amnesiac' communities does not make them any less active or potent, however. As Leonard observes when he is asked why he wants to go on with his quest: 'Just because there are things I don't remember, it doesn't make my actions meaningless. The world doesn't just disappear when you close your eyes, does it?'

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*Les Pierres de Mémoire**The Life History of Two Statue-Menhirs from
Guernsey, Channel Islands**Heather Sebire**Les Mégalithes : Pierres de mémoire*

(J-P. Mohen 1998)

INTRODUCTION

Many prehistoric monuments survive in the landscape and are revered by later generations but there is a special category of artefacts and monuments that reflect images of ourselves, sometimes with just faces and sometimes as life-size human figures. On Guernsey, in the Channel Islands, just off the north-west coast of France, two statue-menhirs or standing stones survive that appear to represent female figures, although the form of the stones themselves may have masculine traits also. Guernsey is the most westerly of the Channel Islands and so it is particularly surprising that these exceptional human representations should be found there (Kinnes 1995). The menhirs have witnessed a long history and have been refigured in modern times possibly in an attempt to Christianize them. One has even been given the local nickname of the 'Grand Mere', implying a benign maternal presence.

THE CHANNEL ISLANDS

Guernsey is one of a group of small islands that lie strategically placed in the western Channel off the northern coast of France, collectively known as the Channel Islands. The islands of Alderney, Sark, Herm, Lihou and Jethou are part of its Bailiwick, but the largest island of Jersey is independent. Guernsey is positioned some 50 kilometres off the western coast of the Cotentin peninsula of Normandy in France and 120 kilometres from mainland Britain. The Bay of Saint Malo, in which Guernsey and the other Channel Islands are situated, has a very large tidal range due to its position and currents. As a result of this, the inter-tidal zone is extensive. Guernsey is 7.5 kilometres at its widest point and 14 kilometres long, with an area of about 63 square kilometres. This area increases at low tide by some 11 square kilometres. As the great French novelist Victor Hugo famously said,

The Channel Islands are fragments of France that fell into the sea and were gathered up by England [...] Of the four islands, Sark, the smallest, is the most beautiful; Jersey, the largest, is the prettiest; Guernsey, wild and charming shares their characteristics.¹ (Hugo 1839, v)

This description fits well with the archaeological record of the islands as an extension of the neighbouring French mainland but also with their own unique island characteristics not just in prehistory but to the present day. This is often reflected in other island scenarios as Scarre and French have outlined in their recent work on Herm (2013, 4). In AD 1204 the islands were picked up by England when King John lost his interests in France.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The areas of land that became the Channel Islands were formed relatively recently with Guernsey becoming cut off from the French mainland first in the sequence some 8,000 years ago (Sebire and Renouf 2010). Jersey remained connected to mainland France until probably a thousand years later (Figure 7.1) and has the earliest archaeological

¹ 'Les îles de La Manche sont des morceaux de France tombés dans la mer et ramassés par L'Angleterre [...] Des Quatres îles, Serk. Le plus petite, est la plus belle; Jersey la plus grande, est la plus jolie; Guernsey, sauvage et riante participe des deux.'



Figure 7.1. The location of the Channel Islands showing the 20-metre submarine contour. After Sebire and Renouf 2010.

remains. The great site at La Cotte de St Brelade produced Lower Palaeolithic material left behind by hunters living on the edge of what was the French mainland (Callow and Cornford 1986; Bates et al. 2013). Later after the inundation of the surrounding valleys and the formation of the islands, groups of hunters and gatherers exploited the coastline and other resources as witnessed by the community on Lihou Island, Guernsey, who were roasting hazelnuts around 7000 BC

(Conneller et al. forthcoming). During the time between the Mesolithic and the Early Neolithic a considerable area of land around Guernsey was lost beneath the waves due to rising sea levels. However, some traces on Guernsey of Early Neolithic settlement were found at the former Royal Hotel site in St Peter Port, contemporary with the Villeneuve-St-Germaine groups in the Paris basin (Cassen et al. 2000; Guyodo and Hamon 2005; Sebire 2012). It is possible that a menhir may have been associated with this site as the developers recounted moving ‘a very large boulder indeed’ from this rescue site before archaeological recording could begin. Later, in the Middle Neolithic, dated in neighbouring western France from 4400 to 3400 BC (Cassen 2000b; 2000c), megalithic burial tombs were built in the Channel Islands with clear affinities to the megalithic tradition of Normandy and Brittany. The large passage grave of Le Déhus on Guernsey, which has an arrangement of side chambers unparalleled in the northern French tombs, however, (Scarre 2011a, 99) has recently produced dates from previously excavated human remains to 4100–3900 BC (Schulting et al. 2010) suggesting the tomb building began in the late fifth millennium BC.

The most spectacular megalithic tomb in the Channel Islands is at La Hougue Bie in Jersey dated in its earliest phase to c. 4000–3500 BC (Patton et al. 1999). The tomb has an unusually long passage entered from the south-east, which leads into a bottle-shaped terminal chamber with three side chambers opening from it in a cruciform arrangement. There are twenty-four circular cup marks carved on the east slab in the northern lateral chamber and several small cists were identified with upright stones suggesting ritual activity within the tomb. As will be discussed regarding the Guernsey statue-menhirs, La Hougue Bie was a focus of local myth and legend as it was so dominant on the landscape and is clearly marked on the Duke of Richmond map of Jersey, drawn in 1787, as La Houque. In the Early Medieval period a chapel, Notre Dame de la Clarté, considered as an attempt to counteract ‘paganism’, was erected. Variations in tomb building in the islands lasted into the final Neolithic and Chalcolithic (from c. 1800 BC) characterized by different forms of megaliths such as the cists-in-circles, found at L’Islet in Guernsey.

The statue-menhirs of Guernsey are part of the island’s megalithic tradition and most likely began their life histories in the Middle Neolithic although as in other areas where they are not part of a larger complex they are notoriously difficult to date. Their survival is

not least remarkable as the record of Neolithic menhirs in Guernsey is partial although, with the aid of earlier records and the evidence of place-names, it can be surmised that thirty or so survived into Medieval or recent times (Guerin 1921; Kinnes 1988). Many more are likely to have been destroyed by agricultural clearance and quarrying, as discussed by Hibbs (1986), who suggested that Guernsey and Jersey had both lost around thirty to forty megalithic sites. Less than ten menhirs, including the two statue-menhirs discussed below, survive today in Guernsey.

EARLY LIFE: DATING OF THE STATUE-MENHIRS

Statue-menhirs of Neolithic date are comparatively rare on the northern French mainland with none known in Jersey or the other Channel Islands. Kinnes noted that it was surprising Guernsey had 'three remarkable examples of Neolithic human representations' (1980, 9), namely the carving on the capstone of Le Déhus, and the menhirs at Le Câtél and St Martin's. Both the Guernsey statue-menhirs relate closely to two statue-menhirs from southern Brittany, one at Le Trévoux Laniscat, Finistère, and another at Kermené, Guidel, Morbihan. The iconography is characterized by paired breasts and necklaces, as with the Guernsey examples, suggesting contact between the two regions (Figure 7.2). Comparable representations also occur on the walls of megalithic tombs in Brittany and the Paris Basin, suggesting the iconography may relate to burial deities. At Crec'h Quillé a further stone was found (L'Helgouach 1967), which was incorporated into a lateral entrance grave and displayed similar iconography and shape, suggestive of a statue-menhir (Kinnes 1980, 15; Scarre 2011).

Other examples are found in the Marne group, in France, where detailed human representations are cut into the soft chalk of the rock-cut tombs or *hypogées*, which were easy to carve (Kinnes 1980, 15; Villes 1998, 33). The Guernsey figures were hewn out of extremely hard granite, which may explain the reduction of motifs in the Paris basin and Breton figures to pairs of breasts in relief, sometimes with necklaces. Kinnes in a later summary (1995) considered the two Guernsey and the two Breton menhirs in greater detail, pointing out that the known menhirs are all relatively recent and

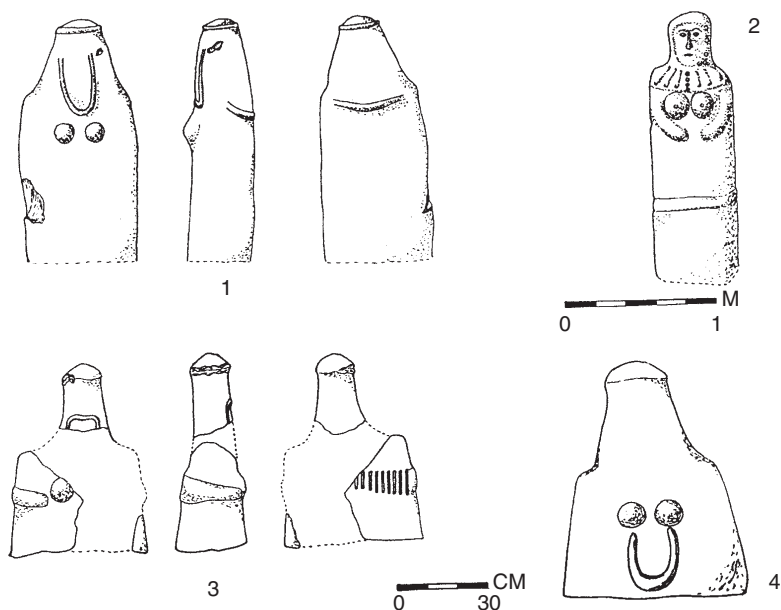


Figure 7.2. Line drawings of the statue-menhirs of Guernsey and southern Brittany: 1. Câtel, Guernsey; 2. Statue-menhir of La Gran'mère, St Martin's, Guernsey; 3. Statue-menhir of Kermené, Guidel, Morbihan; 4. Statue-menhir of La Trévoux, Laniscar, Finistère. After Kinnes 1995, fig. 2.

fortuitous finds, suggesting that more may eventually come to light (Kinnes 1995, 133). The Kermené fragments, for example, were found within a round barrow with domestic debris. Kinnes remarked 'on this evidence close contacts, and a shared conceptual symbolism, must have existed between the two areas in the later third millennium' (1988, 35).

Evidence from France also shows that menhirs were reused and incorporated into tombs after they had been broken up (Cassen 2000a; Scarre 2011). One megalithic tomb in Guernsey, Le Déhus, has a human figure carved on the underside of the capstone so may pre-date the building of the tomb, whose initial use is dated to c. 4100–3900 BC (Schulting et al. 2010). This was first discovered in 1919 (Guerin 1919), long after it had been first excavated by the Lukis family over several years from 1832. The capstone has on its underside a stylized carving featuring a bearded face, arms and

hands, what appears to be a strung bow with arrows, and a series of symbolic designs. This unique carved figure, known locally as *Le Gardien du Tombeau*, has some affinities with Later Neolithic carvings in northern France, but judging by the new dates from the site, it should belong to a rather earlier period, since it is likely to have been incorporated into the tomb. A new survey of the carving is in preparation, which may give more information about its stylistic features (Serge Cassen, pers. comm.).

The two statue-menhirs known in Guernsey are, however, difficult to date, not least due to their lack of provenance. The decoration on the *Câtel* menhir has a necklace above the breasts, which may suggest stylistically a date from the Middle to Late Neolithic (for a fuller discussion of the context within the Neolithic of neighbouring France see Scarre 2011a). In the same churchyard at *Câtel* another large block of granite is now used as a gravestone and may be a fallen menhir. There are also several large megalithic blocks of granite in the lower walls of the church, which may have belonged to a destroyed megalithic tomb on the hill long before a Roman camp and then the parish church were built on the same site.

Other anthropomorphic stones in Guernsey

During excavations at *Les Fouaillages* in the north of the island of Guernsey in the 1980s, a shouldered marker slab was found to stand at the east end of the cairn, which was part of this complex megalithic tomb and perhaps chosen for its resemblance to a human figure (Kinnes 1982). There is no carving on this stone and so it falls more into the category of representational stones (Scarre 2008, 78).

TWO EXCEPTIONAL STATUE-MENHIRS: HISTORICAL DISCOVERY

The two statue-menhirs, which are the subject of this chapter, are among those difficult to date, as their primary archaeological context is lost, but there are stylistic features that may give a good indication of when they were carved and first erected. Their subsequent life histories can then be examined.

Le C  tel menhir

The statue-menhir of Le C  tel on Guernsey, which now stands in the grounds of the parish church (Figure 7.3), was first recorded by Sir Edgar MacCulloch, who was Bailiff of Guernsey in 1878. MacCulloch sent a communication to the Society of Antiquaries of London, describing works that had been carried out at the parish church of St Mary de Castro (MacCulloch 1879, 29–34). Two discoveries were recorded at the time. A furnace was described, which MacCulloch interpreted as a possible bell-casting pit, and which was proved to be the case in excavations in the later 1990s. More relevant to the subject in hand was his recording of ‘a large granite boulder buried in the chancel, and which has been evidently fashioned into a rude resemblance of a female figure’ (MacCulloch 1879, 29). He goes on to give more detail:

Just within the chancel, at about an equal distance from the north and south walls, about a foot below the surface, was found a mass of granite lying east west, and turned over on its left side.

It had all the appearance of a natural boulder somewhat fashioned by art and cannot be described better than by saying that it is in shape like a mummy case, the back being rounded and slightly curved and the front nearly flat with the exception of two protruding breasts which seemed to indicate that it was intended to represent a female. (MacCulloch 1879, 32)

He then describes two ridges raised a little above the surface of the stone which may have been intended to represent either a veil or tresses of hair and the face:

There are no traces of any features remaining, but what should be the face bears evident marks of having been subjected to the hammer or the chisel, as does also the right breast. (MacCulloch 1879, 32)

This is significant as it implies that the right breast had been damaged before it was buried (MacCulloch 1879, 32), possibly during the earliest phase of the parish church in the latter half of the eleventh century AD. After its discovery the stone was taken outside the church and erected where it now stands at the west end of the churchyard. It has been shaped from a local granite block into a human figure of 1.95 metres in height. It now stands with 1.65 metres visible above the ground, with the width at the shoulder of 0.7 metres. The body is



Figure 7.3. The Câtel menhir in the grounds of the parish church. Photograph by Joshua Sebire.

plano-convex in plan (as noted by MacCulloch), giving a flatter ventral surface and rounded dorsal plane. The head and shoulders have been fashioned into a rounded form with a dome-shaped top, around which suggests a crown or circlet in relief. The flattened ventral face does not have any distinct facial features and this emphasizes the relief sculpture of the breasts which are formed of hemispherical domes, one of which has been deliberately hammered off at some point before its discovery in the nineteenth century AD. It is possible that the facial features may have originally been painted (Mohen 1998, 18; Scarre 2008, 83). Below the head is a long U-shaped band forming a necklace in relief and on the back there is the trace of a belt or girdle also in relief.

The shoulders and head are distinct creating a female figure that may represent a 'mother goddess' in the distinctive format of crowned head, lack of facial features, breasts in high relief, and low girdle (Kinnes, 1980). Serge Cassen (2000a) has suggested, however, that there is masculinity to such figures in themselves and in this specific case the 'crown' may emphasize the phallic nature of the statue.

La Gran'mère du Chim'quière

This stone was also found on Guernsey in or near the parish church of St Martin's. It now stands as a gatepost next to the southern gates of the church of St Martin de Bellouse, which is considered to have been named after a natural spring, La Fontaine de Bellouse, which was thought to have healing powers (Figure 7.4). The stone formerly stood in the churchyard on the south side of the church. John McCormack, who has researched Channel Island churches, suggests that it may have served as the equivalent of a churchyard cross (McCormack 1986, 6). It formerly faced east somewhere between its present position and the church door. It also is a local granite block, which has a carved human head and shoulders. At its foot there was a flat slab of stone, which had two cuplike hollows thought to have been for the receipt of offerings to the 'goddess'. It was thought to have been moved to its present position before 1793, as it appears there on two prints, one by artist Joshua Gosselin, where it is seen clearly as a gatepost, and one from William Berry's *History of Guernsey* (1815), but there is no clear documentary description of its repositioning. There was major reworking of the interior of the church in the mid eighteenth century, however, so the stone may have been found under the floor of the church at that time (Darryl Ogier, pers. comm.). This statue-menhir differs from the Câtel menhir as it has a secondary, more elaborate, carving. The stone now stands c. 1.70 metres high and is 0.52 metres broad at the shoulders. Those who fashioned it initially, almost certainly in the Neolithic, dressed and smoothed the local granite block to create a stylized human female figure similar in form to the Câtel figure. The lower features of breasts above curved arms survive from this earliest carving, both in relief, with a lower girdle marked by incised lines. There is no trace of a necklace. Much later, perhaps in the Roman period, the head and shoulders were remodelled so that the figure was given pronounced facial features in a frame of curls but on a reduced head and shoulders. There also appears to be some form of hood or ribbed short cape, which has a central row of domed bosses or buttons. McCormack (1986, 6) suggests that the reduced head and face may have been refashioned to represent a local Celtic deity.



Figure 7.4. The Gran'mère du Chim'quière menhir at the gate of St Martin's parish church. Photograph by Joshua Sebire.

THE LIVES OF THE GUERNSEY STATUE-MENHIRS IN THE ROMAN AND MEDIEVAL PERIODS AND BEYOND

We can piece together the life histories of the two Guernsey statue-menhirs since their original erection and surmise whether their later history and indeed survival is related to their human form, including facial representation. They both play an important role in

modern-day island life and so, despite both being buried and therefore unseen at times in their individual life histories, different factors have ensured their survival to the present day. Their own folklore is as well known by islanders, as is the archaeological record. The stones live on in modern Guernsey with different but very definite roles.

Le Câtél Menhir

Le Câtél is in a striking geographical position in Guernsey on the edge of the 'high parishes', which rise to the high plateau that constitutes the south of the island. In earlier times this would have given a panoramic view out over the other islands, and in fact, in the Roman period, it may have been a signalling position across to Alderney (Riduna) to the north-east and Jersey (Caesarea) to the south-west.

Marie de Garis, in her work on Guernsey folklore, tells us that for Le Câtél menhir 'No stories tell of magical powers for which once it must have been venerated' (Garis 1975, 243). She suggests that the stone was probably placed in the ground in the sixth century AD when the first Christian chapel was built on the hill. Recent excavations at the Câtél church have proved there was a Roman site on the hilltop, as large quantities of floor- and roof-tile and *opus signinum* have been found in excavations at the church, and also outside, while graves and other trenches have been dug (Sebire 1998). It was difficult to determine the nature of the Roman presence here but it is likely to have been a camp or fort and possibly a very early religious site. John McCormack suggests that the early Christians may have used an existing Roman chapel on the site of the Câtél leading to the building of the later church (McCormack 1986, 27). Evidence for Roman presence on the island is now very substantial (Sebire et al. forthcoming). This includes Roman material, particularly Samian pottery, which has been found in many of the megalithic tombs, implying that the Romans wished to leave their mark. It is impossible to tell now if the Romans encountered the Câtél menhir—although it is very likely—or whether the early church builders found it within the remains of decayed Roman buildings. Unlike the Gran'mère menhir at St Martin's church, however, there is no evidence for later reworking of the Câtél stone in the Roman period. The church builders in the eleventh century AD may then have deliberately concealed it there in order to rid the church

of 'pagan' associations. The damage to the right breast may have happened at a similar time as a Christian act against idolatry. An alternative view, however, may suggest that the Romans respected these earlier monuments and may have 'curated' them to ensure their enduring significance.

At the foot of the menhir is a large flat stone, which is the seat of the Fief of La Cour du Lihou. When the menhir was erected outside the church, close to the west door, it is likely that the fief stone was placed at its feet. The fiefs are the grants of land from a duke or king and go back to Guernsey's historic connection with Normandy. Every three years these fief 'seats' are inspected by the Chevauchée, literally 'a riding', when the Seigneurs of the Fief process on horseback around the island inspecting the court's seats and the King's Highway. The Câtel menhir would be a major feature of this procession as the fief seat was inspected. There is no evidence to suggest that the stones were deliberately placed together although it would appear so.

La Gran'mère du Chim'quière

The St Martin's statue-menhir has even less provenance than that of Câtel but it appears that the Romans or local people in the Roman period reused the stone for their own purposes and the stone may have remained standing. However, we do know that in the nineteenth century an attempt to destroy the stone was made. Marie de Garis records it thus:

Throughout the centuries it was likely to be very important to the Martinnaise who looked up to it as a holy stone *ch'tait ènne pierre sait* in Guernsey French. However in 1860 a churchwarden named Tourtel ordered it to be destroyed as the parishioners were practising idolatry or so he thought. It was broken in two but the parishioners were so angry that they protested and so their grandmother was cemented back together again. The stone at her feet was presumably for the purpose of receiving small oblations offered to the idol. (Garis 1975, 244)

Another chronicler of Guernsey folklore, James Stevens-Cox, noted that in the nineteenth century La Gran'mère was referred to as an 'idol of the aboriginal inhabitants', perhaps alluding to the recarving being not unlike a Celtic rather than a Roman deity (1976, 12). He also records that until recently 'it was considered propitious to place an offering of flowers or fruit at the base of the statue which would



Figure 7.5. La Gran'mère du Chim'quière garlanded on May Day. Photograph by Joshua Sebire.

bring good fortune and fertility' (1976, 12). This practice does in fact still go on. Offerings of coins and garlands are placed on the figure at special times of celebration such as weddings, christenings and May Day, as a token of good luck (Figure 7.5). Stevens-Cox also records that La Gran'mère was referred to by local folk as 'Julius Caesar's grandmother' (1976, 12). He relates that a local inhabitant of St Martin's used to see local children removing pennies that had been placed on the Gran'mère's head as good luck offerings.

The statue-menhirs in the modern day

The menhirs are loved by the modern inhabitants of Guernsey and as well as attracting visitors to the sites they feature in the websites of the two parish churches. St Martin's describes the history of the menhirs and points out that in different lights the face of the menhir has different



Figure 7.6. Statue-menhirs depicted on Guernsey stamps. © Guernsey Post Ltd.

expressions.² The Câtel church has a similar page, ‘Catelparish’, which has less information but describes the menhir as an ‘Earth Mother’.³

Guernsey is also well known by lovers of philately for its stamp issues, which reflect island life and are known for their stunning artwork (Figure 7.6). Both menhirs were represented in a special edition of Guernsey stamps portraying prehistoric monuments. The original artwork is held in the collections of Guernsey Museum. The menhirs are both scheduled ancient monuments and are accessible to the general public through the web version of the HBSMR hosted by Digimap.⁴

CONCLUSIONS: THE ONGOING LIFE HISTORIES OF THE MENHIRS

Menhirs or standing-stones remain one of the great mysteries of prehistory but are compelling to archaeologists and the general public

² <<http://www.stmartinschurchguernsey.org/about-us/history-of-the-church/>>.

³ <<http://www.castelparish.org/gg/chstemagmere01.html>>.

⁴ <www.digimap.gg>.

alike. Many suggestions have been put forward to explain their function, for example as territorial markers. Individual stones may have had several roles. Some were markers of megalithic tombs, such as those in the Carnac region of neighbouring northern France (Scarre 2008, 74). They may have been the equivalent of totem poles or monuments of religious or spiritual significance. In the Old Testament, in Genesis, chapter 28, Jacob is described as having taken a stone and erected it as the founding stone or 'pillar' of God's house. The two Guernsey menhirs were certainly exceptional as described in their original Neolithic context (Kinnes 1980; Scarre 2011, 99) along with the carving on the capstone at Le Déhus, and the shouldered stone from Les Fouaillages. The first real evidence of their transformation is the record of their incorporation into religious sites and their re-erection to their present positions. Chris Scarre has suggested that the Christianization of menhirs in Brittany was an alternative to their destruction (2011, 279).

There is further evidence on Guernsey for the tradition of Christianizing menhirs by carving a cross into them, such as at the Vale and St Saviour's parish churches. Little is known of the original provenance of either of these undecorated stones but they are now both in the churchyards of their respective parish churches (Sebire 2009, 133).

The survival of the statue-menhirs may also have been related to the use of local materials. Guernsey granite in all its forms has had a very important significance to the island, be it for monument building, house building or quarrying for export, since the Roman period (e.g. Fishbourne Roman palace, Cunliffe 1998). In the nineteenth century AD projects, such as the steps of St Paul's Cathedral, required Guernsey granite. As Scarre notes (2002, 12) the close referencing of landscape and local materials implies a strong symbolic bond between the two. Although we do not know the exact original position of the menhirs in their respective landscapes, the Guernsey menhirs from the local rock have been imbued with meaning that has lasted over many centuries.

Anthropomorphic form

There is a whole literature on the modern-day psychology of the recognition of the human form and faces in particular (e.g. Peterson

and Rhodes 2003). In archaeological terms the work of John Robb has shown us how the human body has been a central factor of human interaction and the condition of being human (Robb and Harris 2013) from the Palaeolithic to the Modern period. This may have been a factor in the survival of the two Guernsey menhirs, because they are as close to representations of ourselves as human beings, they are very important psychologically. Chris Scarre cites the art historian Eric Gombrich, who said, 'whenever anything remotely facelike enters our field of vision, we are alerted and respond' (Gombrich 1962, 87). Menhirs may have originally been formed to represent important people, or they may have been associated with burials, often after having been broken up. In the case of the Guernsey menhirs, however, they did not follow this tradition of breaking up the menhirs in the Neolithic and redistributing them in other tombs (Bradley 2009, 82).

The Roman period

The archaeological record in the Roman period is such that it shows evidence that Guernsey was settled from the conquest until the fourth century AD (Sebire et al. forthcoming). Many of the parish churches in Guernsey (ten in all) have Roman building material in their fabric. In particular the Câtel church appears to be situated on an earlier Roman site and so we can surmise that the Romans who built the camp (*castrum*—hence Câtel) might have chosen the location not just because it is a major vantage point but also because the menhirs and possible megalithic tomb would have suggested this was already a sacred landscape. The builders of the first Christian chapels on the island similarly may have respected the spot as a place of great antiquity, and as mentioned above, McCormack (1986, 27) suggests that the earliest Christian church may have been built on the site of a Roman chapel (where the parish church now stands), as the early Christians might not have had a specific building in which to worship. Evidence of the Romans interacting with the monuments already built on Guernsey survives in the form of Roman pottery and tile left in many of the megalithic tombs on the island. Samian pottery sherds in particular were found in the Varde and the Déhus passage graves.

The Medieval period

No documentary records survive that mention the menhirs, suggesting they were buried in the Roman period or soon after. Early antiquarians who visited the islands, such as Peter Heylyn in 1629, did not remark on seeing either of the menhirs, again suggesting they were out of sight at the time. Antiquarians such as Philip Falle did take note of what they saw. In his *History of Jersey*, published in 1694, he remarked on some prehistoric remains:

There are still to be seen in this island some old monuments of Paganism. They are great flat stones or rag-stones of vast weight & bulk, raised 3 or 4 feet from the ground and borne up, by others of a less size. We call them Pouquelayses, a word, I can hear of no where, & therefore take it to be purely local.

(Falle 1694, 115)

Pouquelaye in fact is a local Jersey word, which probably meant ‘stones of the fairies’, from ‘Pouque’ being fairy and ‘laye’ being stone. Guernsey’s great antiquarian, Frederick Corbin Lukis (1789–1871), who made extensive records of the island’s prehistory (Sebire 2009), does not record the menhirs. If the Gran’mère was standing in St Martin’s churchyard from AD 1815 it is very surprising that he makes no mention of it in any of his writings, as he started his records of local archaeology in the 1830s.

The significance of these statue-menhirs was imbued when the people who made them carved their chosen iconography onto the hard granite. Their anthropomorphic form appears to relate to those who see them today as much as to their originators. As Scarre suggests (2008, 96) ‘For the societies that created them they did not simply depict human qualities and attributes, but probably embodied them as well’. We have seen how this significance endured through 4,000 years of the life histories of the menhirs, when they have been both visible and invisible, and now live on as significant figures in Guernsey today.

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Back and Forward

Neolithic Standing Stones and Iron Age Stelae in French Brittany

*Luc Laporte, Marie-Yvane Daire, Gwenolé
Kerdivel, and Elías López-Romero*

The history of each place is always unique, and this also applies to each monument. Even the title of this book fits in with a pattern of thought developed by R. Bradley (2010). This approach treats the way in which certain prehistoric monuments continue to focus our attention, and how new significances come to be attributed well after their initial construction. In some cases these monuments are the result of a considerable collective investment. They often represent places of memory, sometimes providing vectors of identity that continue up to the present day. A certain number of these monuments continuously changed their function and configuration through the course of time. They were successively the setting of events that their builders could not have imagined. However, owing to the scale as well as the lasting nature of their achievements, the builders assigned additional unique features to these monuments that others later adapted or simply exploited. Many megalithic monuments of western Europe underwent such a process. Consequently, this chapter also contains the seeds of a more general discussion about the definitions of megalithism (Laporte forthcoming). It is a question of timescales and rhythms, involving lived time just as well as measured time, seen at different geographical scales. This is because the biography of each monument cannot be explained as simply being the sum of events that are unique in each case and specific to each site.

REUSE OF MEGALITHS AND STANDING STONES
IN WESTERN FRANCE

Our contribution to this volume takes as an example the standing stones of Brittany. The region considered here includes the departments of Finistère, Morbihan, Côtes d'Armor, Ille-et-Vilaine and Loire-Atlantique; that is to say an area of approximately 34,300 square kilometres. In the popular imagination, the Iron Age stelae of this region are often associated with the standing stones of the Neolithic, as portrayed in one of the world's best-selling comic books featuring Astérix the Gaul and Obélix the menhir deliveryman. However, for more than a century, archaeologists have always striven to make a clear distinction between material realities that, ultimately, are rather different.

In the west of France, an abundant literature is concerned with the reuse of megalithic monuments in more recent times than the Neolithic (Briard 1997; Scarre 2011; see also Vejby this volume). The examples are indeed so numerous that it would be quite unrealistic here to seek to establish an inventory modelled on the one proposed by Holtorf (2000–8) in Germany. It will suffice to recall here some of the most famous examples. As in the case of Hougue Bie (Jersey), the construction of a chapel on top of the Saint-Michel tumulus in Carnac (Morbihan) would appear rather as a kind of sanctuarization, which is applicable to sites where it is obvious that such structures were built by human hand. The dolmen of Stivel thus serves as a crypt in the chapel of Sept Saints at Vieux-Marché (Côtes d'Armor) (Giot et al. 1998). Such vestiges are often associated with deposits that have a funerary character, and this is also reflected by the presence of many burials in the ground of an Early Medieval cemetery around the Dolmen of Sublaines, in the *département* of Loire (Cordier et al. 1972). While other activities appear to be more secular in nature, they have led to just as many collective and periodic gatherings. The Grand Dolmen of Bagneux (Maine-et-Loire) was used for a long time as a ballroom (Gruet 1967). Such reuses can also be related to a particular event, and the resulting activity can involve transport over very long distances. The covering slabs of the passage grave of La Ville Bélanger in Hénansal (Côtes d'Armor) today form the reinforcement of a war memorial near Ypres (Belgium), thus testifying to the close ties that developed between the inhabitants of these two villages due to the battles of the First World War (Langouët 2004a). The purchase

of one of the dolmens of Kerhan (Morbihan) by J.B. Pikkety (1827–94) for the construction of a family vault in Meudon (Hauts-de-Seine) also reflects the strong symbolic value of these structures at the beginning of the twentieth century AD, and their appropriation by part of the social and economic elite of the time.

In Brittany, the Iron Age stelae also provide many similar examples (Figure 8.1). Their ‘recycling’ began as early as Roman times, and became particularly frequent from the Middle Ages onwards. The process of Christianization not only occurred on a massive scale, affecting thousands of former ‘pagan’ monuments, but also took many forms, with destruction, displacement towards a ‘dedicated’



Figure 8.1. Christianized and Romanized menhirs and Iron Age stelae in Brittany: 1. Saint Duzec, Côtes d’Armor (Photograph by Marie-Yvane Daire); 2. Beg an Toul, Finistère (Photograph by Marie-Yvane Daire); 3. Kervadel, Finistère (After Chatellier 1879).

place (chapel, fountain, etc.) and changes of appearance (engravings, addition of a cross), without counting blessing ceremonies and other rituals not leaving any physical trace. Such practices sometimes reflect a 'rejection' of the megalithic object, but much more often a 're-appropriation' expressed at various times and sometimes still emerging in the civil life of certain communities. While some Gallic stelae were converted into milestones in Gallo-Roman times, many more were transformed into supports of crosses or architectural elements, and even baptismal fonts. A large number of these objects formed parts of Christian churches, chapels and cemeteries. Although other monoliths were initially worked during the Iron Age and were used as probable identity-related and cultural symbols, it is not uncommon to see them nowadays ornamenting the flowerbeds of town halls or post offices, etc. Such a phenomenon was thus initially due to the action of religious communities, but then it became civil and secular. Today, it represents the result of many different individual initiatives. These changes somewhat hinder our interpretation of maps and inventories, and go along with a fluctuation of the symbolic value attributed to the Iron Age stelae, which frequently evolves from the funerary and sacred domain to much more commonplace, civil functions or techniques.

In reality, these mechanisms appear to be intrinsic to the very concept of the monument. Consequently, how can we take account of the monument when this involves defining the site in terms of the characteristics of one particular past monumental form? To a certain extent, this is the question we are posing in relation to the Iron Age stelae. But, conversely, how far do we need to take account of such mechanisms to obtain a more precise image of other similar monumental forms that existed previously at these sites? These earlier architectures might have inspired later monuments, but locally may have very well contributed to masking their true extent. This is also much the same question that arises concerning the menhirs.

NEOLITHIC 'MENHIRS' IN BRITTANY

Including several thousands of standing stones, the alignments of Carnac remain a unique example of Atlantic megalithism in the context of western Europe. However, no systematic and up-to-date

inventory of the standing stones has yet been published for Brittany, at least since the list produced for the whole of France at the beginning of the twentieth century AD. This is not the least of paradoxes, taking into account the dynamism of research in this field, in particular during the last twenty years. In its current state, our inventory includes 1,222 sites comprising standing stones as against 1,182 megalithic funerary monuments, that is to say, substantially equivalent figures (L'Helgouac'h 1965; Gouézin 1994; 2007; Giot 1995; Mornand 1998; 2005; Briard et al. 2004; Langouët 2004b; 2006a; 2006b; 2012; Sparfel and Pailler 2009). This database, most of which has never been published before, forms part of a more general study of the occupation of space in the west of France (Kerdivel 2012).

Apart from giving the number of sites, this inventory lists at least 6,800 standing stones. We only take account here of stones that have been moved to be set up in a vertical position. Other blocks of stone were merely raised, such as in the case of burials under covering slabs. Others still make up the walls of covered spaces, as in the case of many corridor-type dolmens. Although it is very difficult precisely to date the setting up of each individual block, in the very large majority of cases the emplacement is generally attributed to the Neolithic. In this way, although certain menhirs could have been erected as early as the first half of the fifth millennium BC, others were emplaced during the Bronze Age, as shown very clearly by J. Briard in the case of Château Bû at Saint-Just (Ille-et-Vilaine) (Briard et al. 1995). This time span corresponds to approximately 3,500 years, although the rhythm and intensity of the construction's episodes could have been variable during this period. The dimensions of these blocks vary considerably, as well as the raw materials of which they are made. Their degree of shaping, which is often more marked than appears at first sight, is also highly variable. Thus, the grouping together of these few thousand standing stones under the same term is, in itself, a first approximation.

A very significant proportion of these arrangements is confined to a restricted number of sites concentrated in the south of the *département* of Morbihan or the Crozon peninsula in Finistère, with a slightly less dense concentration in the south of Ille-et-Vilaine. In fact, there are hardly more than 200 sites (Figure 8.2:B). Some of the arrangements are organized in rows, or sometimes as enclosures. Alignments are made up of one or more parallel rows, while enclosures are quadrangular or circular in form, and sometimes of very

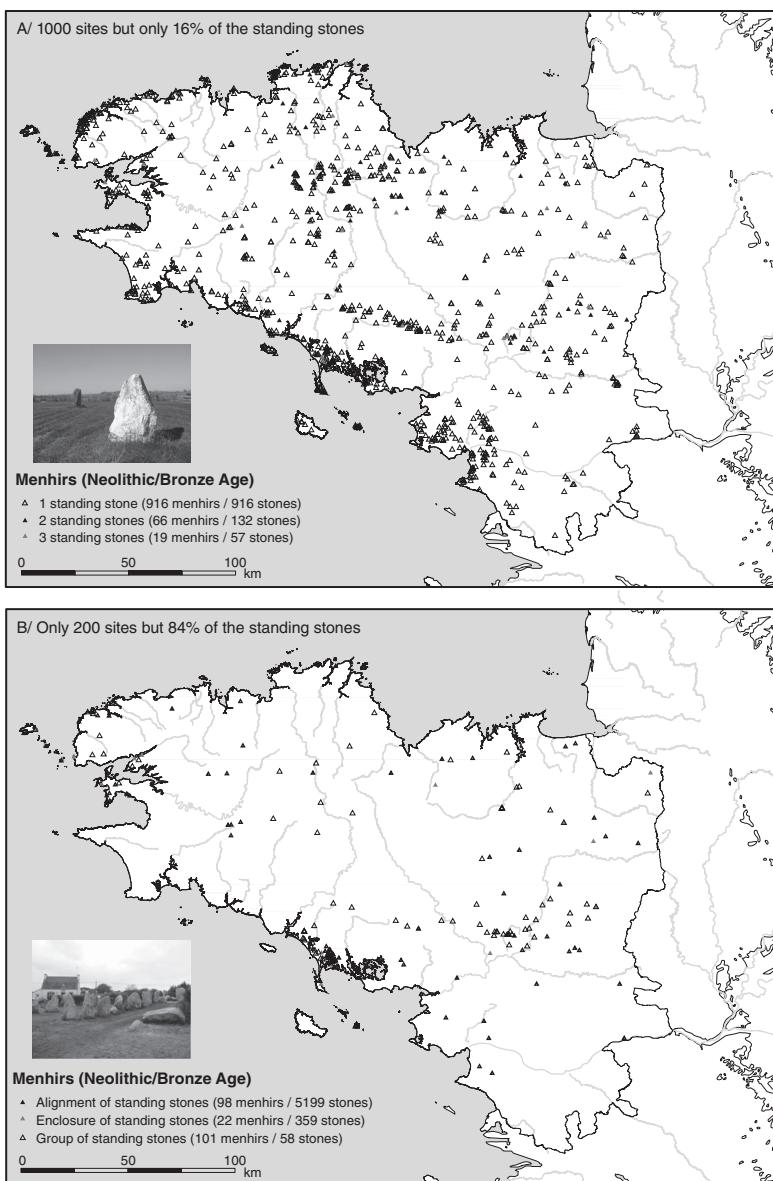


Figure 8.2. Maps showing the distribution of menhirs in Brittany. CAD drawing by Gwenolé Kerdivel and photographs by Luc Laporte.

variable size. Standing stones only arranged in groups display still more varied patterns. In Brittany, 84 per cent of standing stones belong to such types of arrangements. This number is probably underestimated, for two reasons: some recent surveys under forest cover reveal further new alignments, or provide additional information about other arrangements that have long been known; the increase of rescue archaeology operations is now constantly bringing to light the existence of dismantled arrangements—mainly although not exclusively in the Morbihan—with blocks of stones sometimes completely covered by later sedimentation (Hinguant and Boujot 2009).

On the other hand, nearly 80 per cent of the listed sites contain only one, two or three standing stones (Figure 8.2:A). Out of about a thousand occurrences, this is the most frequently observed case. The spatial distribution of this type of arrangement proves to be homogeneous, but with some concentrations in the south of the *département* of Morbihan and on the Landes de Lanvaux, as well as in North Finistère or in the Brière marshland, for example. However, isolated standing stones account for hardly more than 15 per cent of the total number of standing stones in Brittany. Here again, we need to qualify this statement in various ways for the following reasons. First of all, the greatest variability in form, size and weight of the moved blocks is observed when there are no more than three standing stones. Also, the same type of arrangement can occasionally appear on both of the maps shown in Figure 8.2. This applies to certain alignments containing from three to five standing stones placed symmetrically on either side of a higher block that is more massive than the others, as indeed has been shown, for example, in the Vendée (Bénéteau 2000). Moreover, we now know that two vaguely aligned blocks can sometimes quite easily represent the only vestiges of much larger arrangements, nowadays destroyed and whose presence or absence has only been tested in very exceptional cases. Conversely, by stressing the collective effort that was provided (in particular, to ensure the transport and setting up of the block) rather than the result obtained (which is not always so different from the aspect of certain natural outcrops present nearby), it is likely that modern-day observations fail to account for the reality as perceived during Neolithic times.

The relationship between standing-stone arrangements and topography is an issue largely discussed, but generally on a rather local geographical scale. On the scale of Brittany, there is also a close

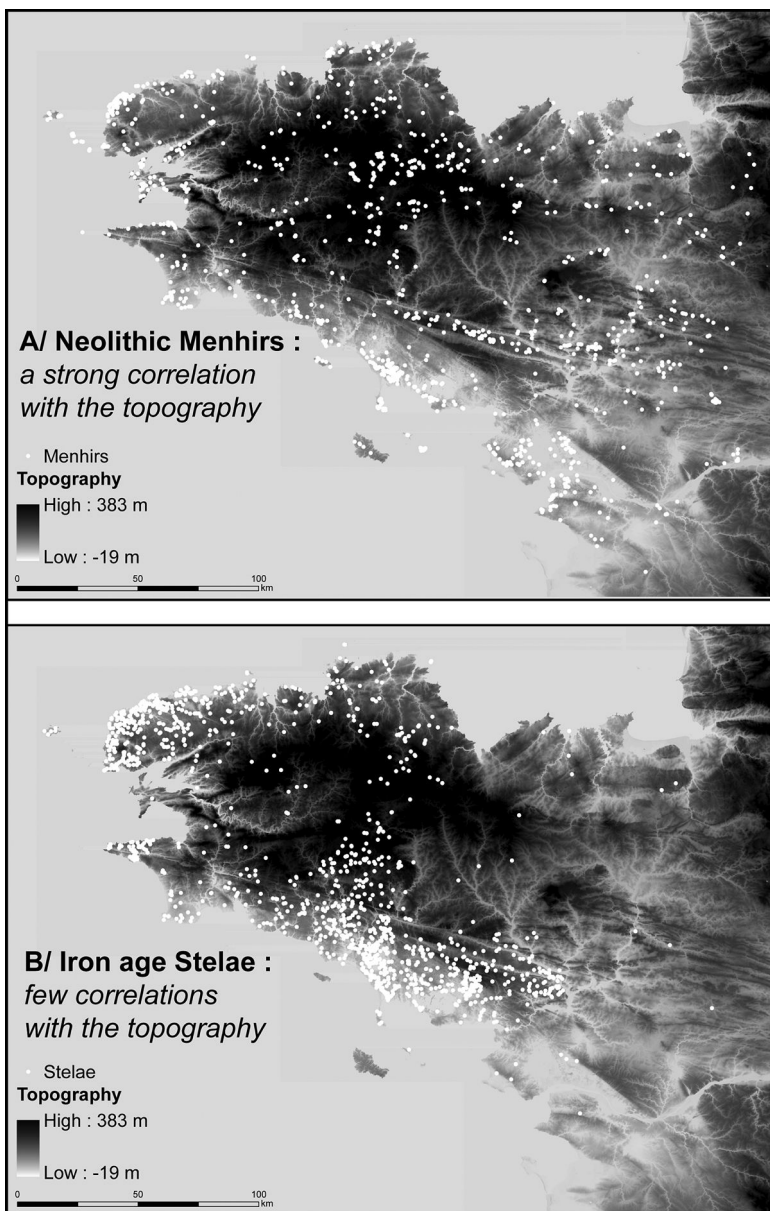


Figure 8.3. Distribution of standing stones in Brittany according to relief. CAD drawing by Gwenolé Kerdivel.

correlation between the distribution of standing stones and areas of high relief, and this seems just as clear in coastal zones, although expressed in a discontinuous way. For comparison, on the same geographical scale, such a correlation is practically non-existent for the Iron Age stelae (Figure 8.3). This separation in the pattern of emplacement in the landscape between the two periods also seems to apply to other types of structure (e.g. funerary monuments and enclosures, López-Romero 2008).

IRON AGE 'STELAE' IN BRITTANY

In the same way as for the inventory of megaliths, the database on Iron Age stelae (Daire et al. forthcoming) is built on the revised and completed 'Patriarche' database of the Ministry for Culture and on publications concerning regional inventories (Daire and Giot 1989; Tanguy 1997; Le Brozec and Daire 1998; Lecornec 1999; 2003). This inventory lists approximately 1,700 Iron Age stelae in the west of France (Brittany and the *département* of Loire-Atlantique). While the number of individual standing stones is much lower than the numbers erected during earlier periods, the corresponding number of sites has the same order of magnitude. However, the time frame is much more restricted, since the majority of these stelae were undoubtedly carved during a period of less than 300 years (Figure 8.4:A). These stelae are dated only by extrapolation based on the Iron Age burial remains with which they are sometimes associated (cremated bones, cinerary urns, etc.). When dating results are available, the ages obtained are systematically well correlated with necropolises containing cremations that were emplaced over a relatively restricted period of time, evaluated as less than approximately three centuries (550–400 to 350–300 BC). Thus, it is more and more tempting to think that the abandonment of the practice of erecting stelae corresponds to a change of funerary rituals, since these monoliths disappeared at the same time as the latest cemeteries that mainly contain cremations.

The Iron Age stelae are blocks of stone that are cut out symmetrically on either side of a vertical axis: the upper visible part is made up of fashioned or carved stone surmounting the base, which is hidden in the ground and left roughly hewn (Figure 8.4:B). These

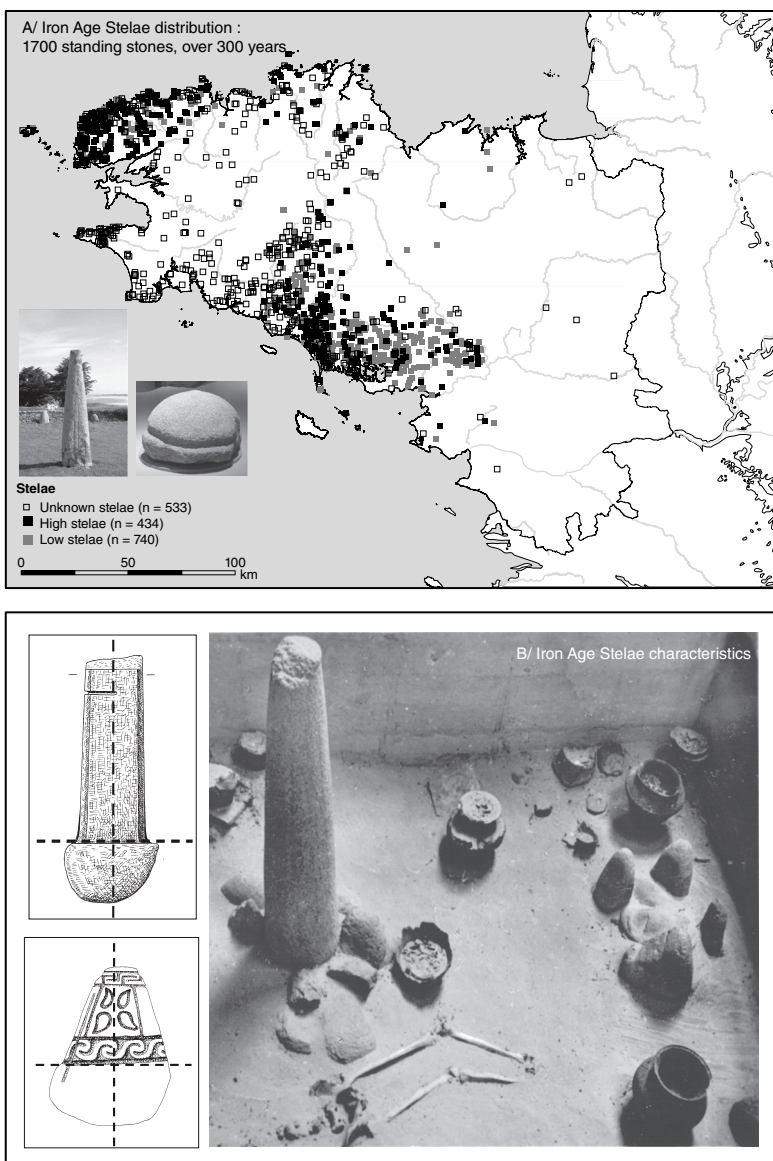


Figure 8.4. Distribution of Iron Age stelae according to published inventories (top) (CAD drawing by Gwenolé Kerdivel), morphological characters (bottom left) and insertion in an Iron Age funerary context (bottom right) (Photograph and drawing by Marie-Yvane Daire).

two morphological features distinguish stelae from stones that were set up in earlier periods. On the whole, we attribute a commemorative or funerary function to these stelae, serving as markers of burials or cemeteries. There are two major categories of stelae: i) low stelae, whose upper visible part is formed of hewn stone having an ovoid or hemispherical shape, and ii) so-called 'high' stelae. These latter correspond to barrel-shaped cylindrical columns, frequently notched with vertical grooves, or pillars with a polygonal section and having between four and twelve sides. Their dimensions are extremely varied, with heights ranging from more than 3 metres for some large stelae in Finistère, down to a few decimetres for certain small low stelae. Stelae with octagonal sections are densely represented in a small area around Plougonvelin (Finistère), which suggests the existence of a specialized workshop. However, on a broader level, we are still unable to explain the diversity of the morphological variants. All types of stelae (both high and low) are found in variable proportions over the whole of the territory of Brittany, sometimes even found together within the same cemetery.

The geographical distribution of Iron Age stelae corresponds broadly to the Armorican peninsula. They are more densely distributed in the western part of the peninsula, that is, in the districts of Leon, Cornouailles and the west of Morbihan. In spite of some shortcomings in the documentation of inventories in certain geographical sectors, the distribution of stelae is nowadays broadly validated. A morphological convergence with the stones erected in earlier periods appears more evident in the case of high stelae, which can be compared with carved menhirs (e.g. at Kerloas in the commune of Plouarzel, Finistère). However, the discovery of stones closely similar to Armorican stelae has extended the limits of the phenomenon farther east towards the territory of the Diablantes (a score of stelae are listed today in Mayenne, for example, at Jublains), as far as the mouth of the Loire and even beyond, more sporadically, into central western Gaul. In contrast with the distribution of menhirs, there is no concentration of stelae on the coast. This is consistent with our recent syntheses on the settlement of Armorica during the Iron Age, which seems to be homogeneous over the whole of the territory (Daire et al. forthcoming).

The distribution of Iron Age stelae appears to be closely linked with the occurrence of granitic terrains (stelae are concentrated on 21 per cent of the total outcrop area of this geological substrate), since the

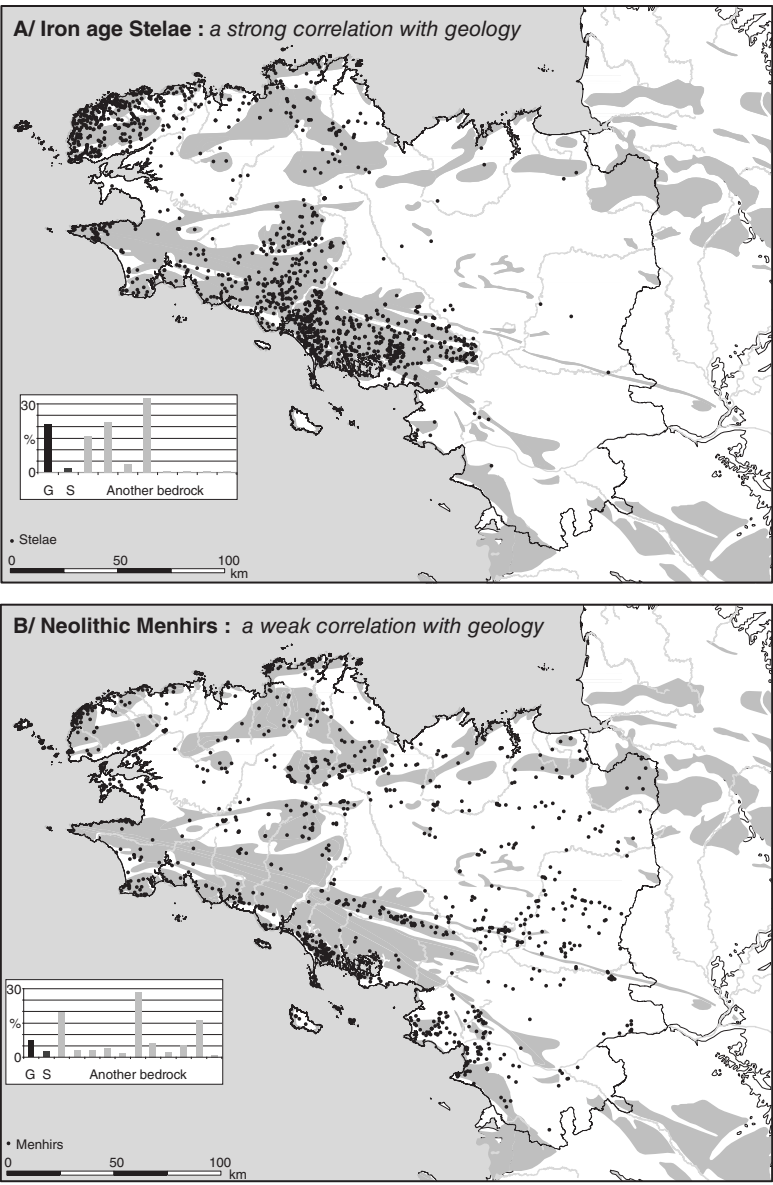


Figure 8.5. Distribution of standing stones in Brittany according to granitic-type substrate. CAD drawing by Gwenolé Kerdivel.

Gallic stelae of Armorica are almost exclusively fashioned out of granitic-type rocks in the broad sense. This distribution is quite different from that observed for the standing stones of former times, which are emplaced on granite or schist, and moreover concentrated on respectively 7 per cent and 2 per cent of the densities of Neolithic standing stones according to the total area of these substrates (Figure 8.5). This nearly exclusive selection of granite would thus appear to be a specificity of Iron Age stonemasons; elsewhere in Armorica, craftsmen did not have recourse to materials of substitution. In the light of a possible resemblance between certain high stelae and oak barrels, we can nevertheless consider that wooden monuments, used for the same purpose and even having similar forms, could have been erected in granite-poor terrains.

BACK AND FORTH

In Brittany, among all the stones erected separately in the open (isolated or grouped) since the end of the Mesolithic up until the Iron Age, we can identify more than 8,400 that have survived to the present. They were thus mainly erected during a period of approximately 4,500 years and form approximately 2,900 distinct arrangements (Figure 8.6). While the majority of these stones have hardly been shaped after their extraction (even if this first impression should be largely qualified), the technical differences which distinguish them from Iron Age stelae stem perhaps more from the nature and the standardization of their shaping.

Clearly, we should address the question of how two designed architectures can develop similar forms even though they are implemented at distinctly different times. Does this reflect a simple convergence? The geographical and chronological proximity of these two architectures casts doubt on such a possibility. Maybe it is because they convey symbolic value systems, even identity, which, from our modern viewpoint, leads to a convergence between the architectures. The comparison that is sometimes proposed with certain contemporary funerary stelae fits within this conception. Maybe these values have aspects which—even if not entirely universal—are at least recurrent throughout the ages and largely widespread over the globe. We



Figure 8.6. An Iron Age Stelae used as support for a modern observatory of the whole sector, situated on top of the Middle Neolithic ‘tumulus Saint-Michel’ (Carnac, Morbihan). Photograph by Marie-Yvane Daire.

must therefore guard against misguided reasoning that can only lead to trivial arguments in favour of the notion of ‘verticality’.

Daire (2005) has already evoked the possibility of a frequent reuse of menhirs. In certain cantons of the Côtes d’Armor they could have been refashioned as Iron Age stelae, even though direct evidence of such recarving is quite difficult to demonstrate. This is mainly suggested by the interpolation map obtained by kriging (Conolly and Lake 2006), which is produced for this same sector using the data presented here (Figure 8.7). Indeed, several cases of the exclusion of menhirs in favour of Armorican stelae are observed in Finistère and the west of Morbihan, in sectors where inventories actually exist. In this way, northern Finistère is the one area where Armorican stelae are associated with very few listed menhirs, except for the coast between the rias of Aber Ildut and Aber Benoit, where menhirs and Armorican stelae coexist in almost equal numbers. In this zone, menhirs are very rare and are largely encircled by the stelae.

Complementarities and contrasts in the spatial distribution of these two phenomena suggest they are not entirely independent of each other. However, we probably do not always have to seek a direct causative link in the form of reuse or re-creation, as proposed for

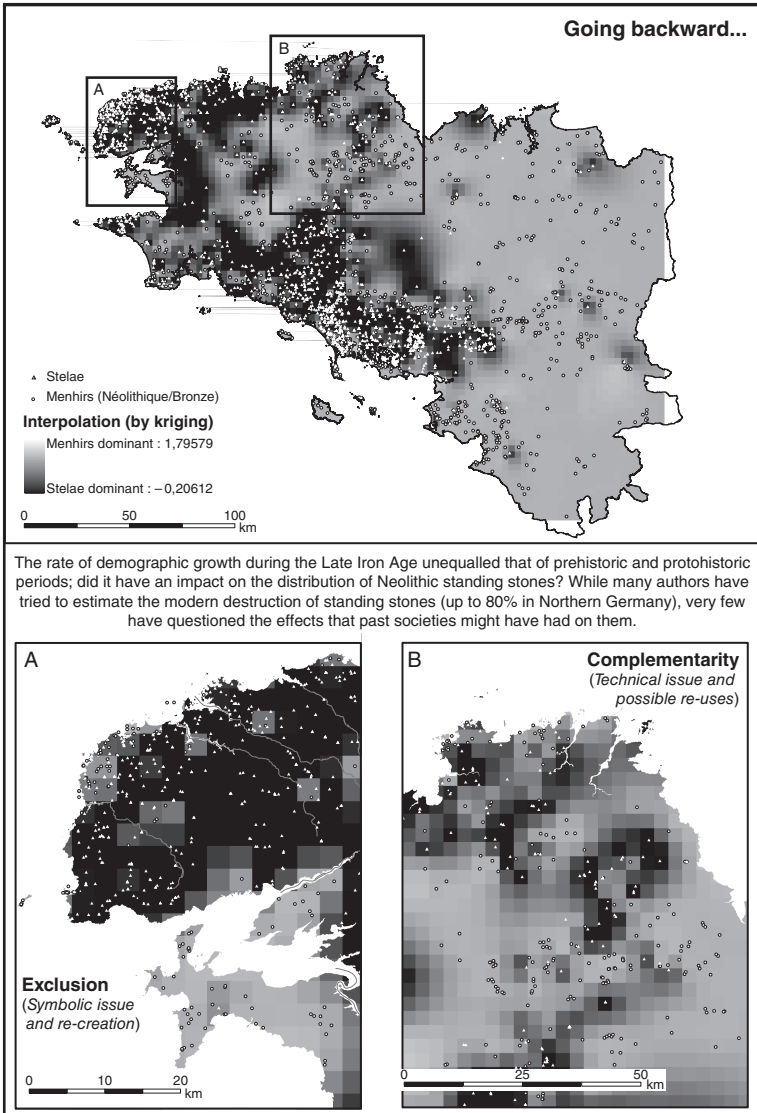


Figure 8.7. Method use in geography for the correlation of two variables showing here interpolation between the distributions of menhirs and Iron Age stelae in Brittany. Statistical analysis and CAD drawing by Gwenolé Kerdivel.

the cases of reuse mentioned here, between both phenomena. The alternative involves regarding the Iron Age stelae as one of the ultimate components of this form of megalithism, which is essentially discontinuous in time. Neolithic standing stones have been erected (and removed) over a period of several millennia, at unequal rates in time and with constant adjustments in space and form, as is well illustrated in this region by the example of Hoëdic island (Morbihan) (Large and Mens 2008). All these elements form part of the same process of monumentalization. In such a perspective, the isolated Iron Age stelae would be nothing more than the very last development in a local tradition that has persisted for five millennia (Figure 8.7).

From this point of view, the 1,700 Iron Age stelae would be among the only stones erected during the first millennium BC, which corresponds to a rate of emplacement of the same order of magnitude as that obtained for the 6,800 stones erected during the preceding 3,500 years (Figure 8.8). On the other hand, a continuous phenomenon occurring at the same annual rate as applicable to the Iron Age stelae over a period of 300 years would have led to the setting up of the much larger number of 20,000 standing stones during the Neolithic. The whole phenomenon is definitely not a continuous one. Moreover, if we merely take account of the number of built structures, independently of the number of stones which compose them, we could say—just to be provocative—that the Iron Age is certainly the most megalithic of all periods when it comes to standing stones, thus siding with the authors of the strip cartoon ‘Astérix’ against the opinion of all the specialists! In fact, on the scale of western Europe, there is nothing shocking about extending the latest manifestations of Atlantic megalithism in Britain up until the middle of the first millennium BC. The consideration of other forms of megalithism, elsewhere in the world and sometimes sub-contemporaneous, (Joussaume 2003) also points in the same direction.

Such examples are not just confined to the megalithism of Britain. For example, in the Iberian peninsula, the reuse of numerous standing stones is well known in the architecture of monuments of the fourth and third millennia BC. Some authors see the representation of the human figure as a common thread, and this continues up to the first millennium BC (Bueno Ramírez et al. 2007). Possible menhirs refashioned as statue-menhirs and stelae are also recorded during the Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age in western Iberia (Gomes 1994; Celestino 2001; Fábrega-Álvarez et al. 2011; see also

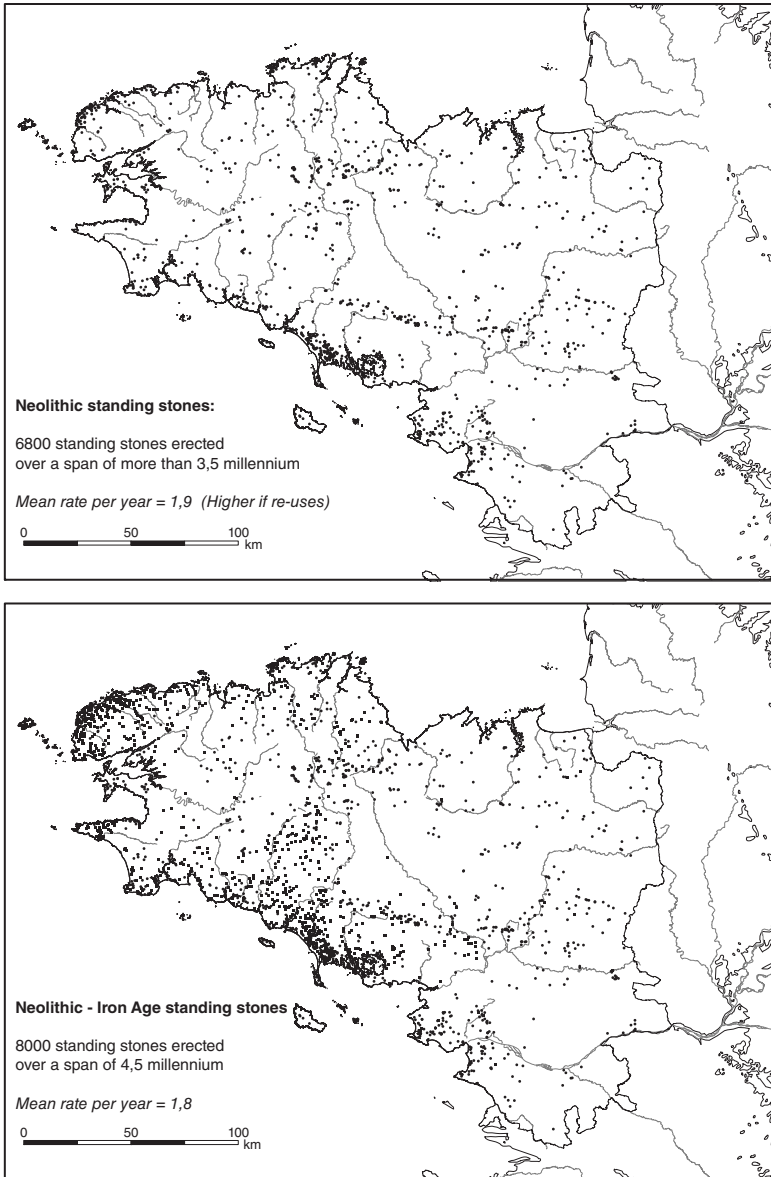


Figure 8.8. Neolithic and Iron Age standing stones: the same rate is applied on a long timescale, but at unequal rates through the course of time. During the Iron Age, 1,700 Stelae were erected in less than 300 years. Assuming a continuous phenomenon for the Neolithic, the same annual rate would lead to the setting up of more than 20,000 standing stones. CAD drawing by Gwenolé Kerdivel.

García Sanjuán and Díaz-Guardamino this volume). In Portugal, in central Alentejo, the building of certain structures of funerary character during the first millennium BC fits in with the Neolithic monumental tradition, in spite of the corresponding chronological hiatus, as observed, for example, at Monte da Tera, (Rocha and Calado 2006, 20–6). In the British Isles, reuses are probably less frequent, but they also exist. Some standing stone arrangements sometimes appear to have been emplaced as late as the first millennium BC (Bradley 2010).

CONCLUSION

Just as a sum of individual destinies contributes to the forging of what we call ‘history’, without always being sufficient to explain it, establishing the biography of certain monuments also plays a role in our understanding of prehistoric and proto-historic times. Atlantic megalithism is one of the phenomena marking recent prehistory in western Europe. Standing stones, or menhirs, represent one of the components of this phenomenon. One of the main problems encountered in this discussion is that menhirs and stelae have received less attention in the tradition of European research compared to other types of megalithic monuments. The other difficulty is due to the often imprecise dating of this type of monument. As a result, Iron Age stelae, especially the highest ones whose form could have been inspired by some of the Neolithic standing stones, appear as one of the latest manifestations of megalithism, at least on this scale of analysis. Even more, many of these high stelae were undoubtedly recarved Neolithic menhirs, as suggested by the distribution of both kinds of monuments in some areas.

Going forward, this serves to highlight the symbolic and social significance of the phenomenon. Going backwards, such an approach could help us fill in some gaps in the present-day distribution of Neolithic standing stones in Brittany. This could be the very first step towards applying ‘retrospective’ history to prehistoric and protohistoric periods.

Translation—M. Carpenter

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Enduring Past

Megalithic Tombs of Brittany and the Roman Occupation in Western France

Mara Vejby

THE REUSE OF MEGALITHIC TOMBS IN ROMAN BRITTANY: AN INTRODUCTION

The extended lives of prehistoric monuments, whether or not they were interacted with once their initial phase of use had ended and how they were treated, can reveal valuable details about a culture. To *interact* with a place means that the action or influence is reciprocal. The individual, or group of individuals, is somehow affected by the physical contact they've had with the site, and the place in turn has been altered. *Interactions* are more than just *reuse* of a space. In fact, missing pieces of monuments' biographies, evidence of subsequent use and treatment, are details that may tell us how a people dealt with their own past as well as that of others. The focus of this study is a region in which the biographies of a group of monuments appear to be intimately tied to clashing cultures during the Roman occupation: Morbihan, Brittany.

Brittany is the westernmost province of France, roughly 30 kilometres north-west of the mouth of the Loire river, and extending over 200 kilometres westward into the Celtic Sea. The south-easternmost department of this province is Morbihan, which makes up over 6,800 square kilometres and centres on the Gulf of Morbihan, a few kilometres south of Vannes (Darioritum), the Roman-period *civitas*-capital of the Veneti (Figure 9.1).

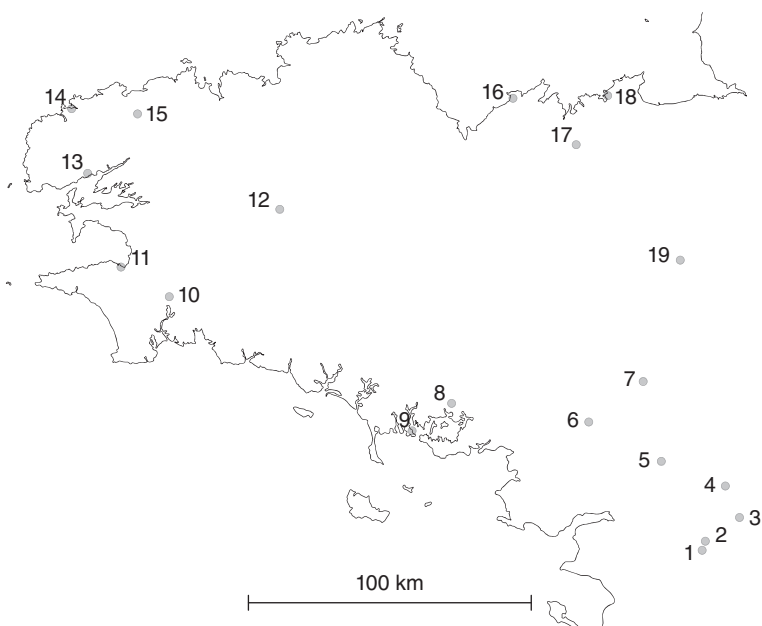


Figure 9.1. The Armorican *civitates*. 1. Rezé; 2. Nantes; 3. Mauves; 4. Petit-Mars; 5. Blain; 6. Rieux; 7. Langon; 8. Vannes; 9. Locmariaquer; 10. Quimper; 11. Douarnenez; 12. Carhaix-Plouguer; 13. Brest; 14. Aber Wrac'h; 15. Kerilien; 16. Erquy; 17. Corseul; 18. Aleth; 19. Rennes. Map by Mara Vejby.

Darioritum was not only a port for commercial ships, but was also on the major road network connecting the Coriosolitae (Corseul), Osismes (Carhaix-Plouguer) and Namnetes (Nantes) *civitates* (Galliou and Jones 1991, 77, 81, 84).

Evidence found in a thorough survey of Iron Age and Roman materials at megalithic tombs in Atlantic Europe revealed that Brittany is by far the region with the highest concentration of direct Roman period interactions, despite both the distribution of megalithic tombs across the peninsula and subsequent habitation patterns during the Iron Age and Roman periods (Scarre 2011, 29–33; Vejby 2012) (Figure 9.2). It also revealed that this activity is a major shift from the comparatively low number of megalithic tombs at which Iron Age materials have been found. There are instances during various periods where subsequent structures are built nearby Neolithic monuments, such as: Castel Meur, where an Iron Age promontory fort was built around a Bronze Age burial mound, or at Kervazic, where an Iron Age stela was placed near a Neolithic slab

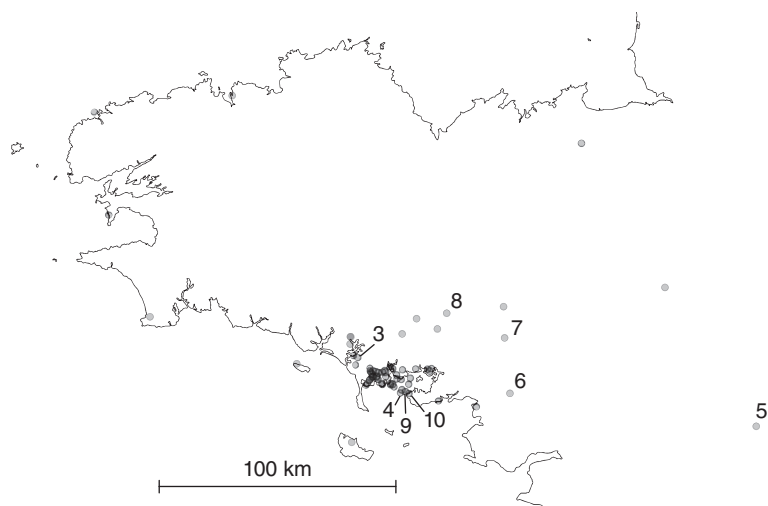


Figure 9.2. Megalithic tombs with Iron Age or Roman material in Brittany. 1. Ile Gaignog; 2. Lostmarc'h; 3. Er Roch'h; 4. Le Petit Mont; 5. Dolmen du Champ-du-Ruisseau; 6. Le Tombeau des Maîtres; 7. Carhon; 8. Migourdie; 9. Tumiatic; 10. Le Grand Mont à Saint Gildas de Rhuys. Map by Mara Vejby.

(Gouézin 2007, 46–7). However, including such activity equally alongside direct interactions with prehistoric sites can be problematic because the intent of the proximity between two sites is unclear if there is no physical interaction with, or obvious avoidance of, the prehistoric structure.

So far, compelling evidence of physical Iron Age interaction has only been found at four megalithic tombs in Brittany. The scale of interaction at two Finistère sites is particularly intensive, namely: the occupation around, and manipulation of, the chambered cairns at Ile Gaignog and the Iron Age hillfort constructed around the 'likely megalithic tomb' at Lostmarc'h (Wheeler and Richardson 1957, 110; Bender and Caillaud 1986, 90; Daire and Quesnel 2008). However, evidence of Roman-period material has been uncovered at sixty-three different sites on the peninsula, which may indicate a significant increase in the physical interactions with such sites during the Roman period. The extended biographies of these prehistoric tombs in Brittany create a unique regional narrative for these periods, in a similar fashion to the discussion of Breton standing stones and stelae by Laporte et al. in this volume (Chapter 8).

The concentration of Roman interactions might be partially explained by the fact that Brittany has the highest aggregation of megaliths in all of France (Daniel 1960, 71). However, this would not explain the lack of Iron Age reuse in the same area. It is possible that fewer sites with Iron Age activity were identified because Iron Age material is generally more difficult to detect (Lecornec 2001, 290). While this explanation might account for some Iron Age activity being overlooked, it is unlikely that it was nearly all overlooked. It is more probable that a larger number of sites were reused during the Roman period than during the Iron Age. If some Iron Age material went unidentified at a few sites this would have only added to the difference in number between the sites with evidence of Iron Age versus Roman activity in the region. These numbers, however, do not include megalithic tombs at which subsequent structures were built within close proximity, unless there were associated materials found at or in the tomb itself. Though the proximity of later structures to these tomb sites may represent a reuse of space, it is much more difficult to infer the intentions without any associated deposits. Either way, the sharp increase in deposits at Neolithic tombs during the Roman period marks a significant shift from the previous evidence of Iron Age interactions. Minimally, this shift may indicate a changed nature of interaction during the Roman period.

MEGALITHIC TOMBS AND VENUS STATUETTES ALONG THE GULF OF MORBIHAN

Given the sheer number of sites at which evidence of Roman material deposits have been identified in Brittany, especially in Morbihan, it would belabour the point and obscure the analysis to discuss each and every site in detail. Instead, this discussion will focus on a smaller collection of tombs in Brittany at which Roman-goddess (mainly Venus) statuettes have been discovered (Figure 9.3). Not only are these sites primarily concentrated within Morbihan, but interactions of this type are unparalleled within the much larger pattern of subsequent activity in Atlantic Europe (Vejby 2012).

Earthenware statuettes of Mother Goddesses, Venus, Minerva, Epona, and other goddesses are found across the Roman Empire in varying concentrations (Thévenot 1968; Lloyd-Morgan 1986; Bémont

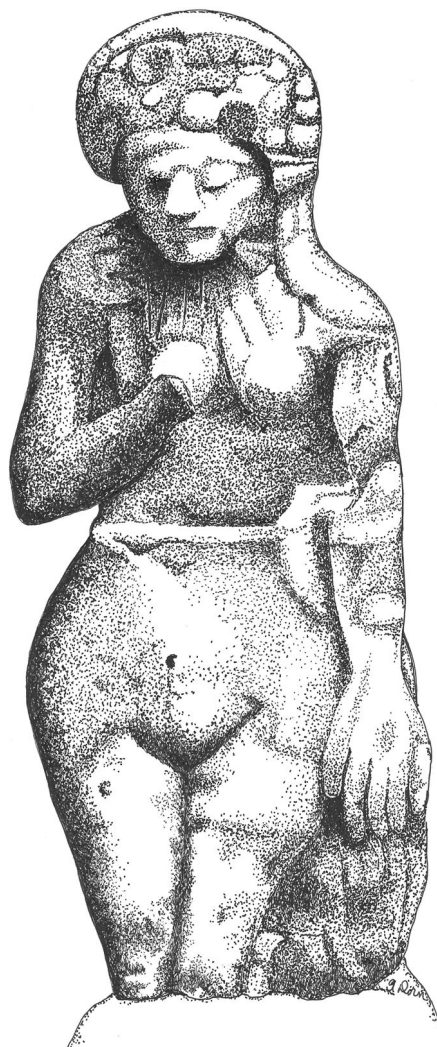


Figure 9.3. Statuette from Le Petit Mont (Arzon, Morbihan). Drawing by Robin Dorn, after Lecornec 1994, Plate XXXIII. © Mara Vejby.

et al. 1993; Cunliffe 2004; Talvas 2010). Though they are only found at 14.5 per cent of the megalithic tombs with evidence of Roman interaction in Brittany, the treatment and distribution of these sites creates a distinct regional pattern, centring on Morbihan, thereby providing valuable insight into the Roman-period biographies of megalithic

tombs on this peninsula. In fact, clear evidence of similar deposits have so far only been found at one site outside of Brittany: Dolmen du Champ-du-Ruisseau.

This outlier tomb is located in Pays de la Loire almost 100 kilometres from the modern border of Brittany, and roughly 110 kilometres from Le Tombeau des Maîtres, which is the next nearest tomb at which Venus statuettes have been uncovered. Despite its significant physical separation from other sites with Venus statuettes, the materials indicating Roman interaction with Dolmen du Champ-du-Ruisseau closely mirror those found at other sites in Brittany. Unlike these other sites, however, Dolmen du Champ-du-Ruisseau also contains more modern materials. A Venus statuette and another Mother Goddess statuette were found within the interior of the tomb, in addition to two bronze coins and a couple of faux-coins made of schist (Gruet 1967, 56). Whether these were Roman coins or Gaulish coins, however, was not stated. Roughly forty Gallo-Roman pottery sherds were also found within the cairn material (Gruet 1967, 56). Michel Gruet argues the materials indicate there was once a small *temple rustique* or *fanum rustique* within the chamber area (Gruet 1967, 56, 318). The presence of Roman pottery and coins is consistent with the material types found in association with Venus statuettes at the other tombs in Brittany (91 per cent of these sites contained associated pottery and 55 per cent contained coins). In addition, a few pieces of Medieval and modern pottery were found at Dolmen du Champ-du-Ruisseau, in the layers just above these Roman artefacts (Gruet 1967, 56).

There are ten other megalithic tombs in France at which similar statuettes appear, and they are all located in Morbihan: Lanester, Bergous, Le Petit Mont, D'Er Bé, Rocher, Migourdie, Carhon, Mané Rétual, Le Tombeau des Maîtres, and Toulvern. Seven of these sites are closely centred around the Gulf of Morbihan, while the remaining three (Le Tombeau des Maîtres, Carhon, and Migourdie) are slightly removed (Figure 9.4).

Le Tombeau des Maîtres is located near the River La Vilaine, close to the Brittany/Pays de la Loire border, and over 30 kilometres east of the Gulf of Morbihan. Fragments of Roman pottery and two white earthenware statuettes of Venus Anadyomene ('Venus Rising From the Sea') were found in this gallery grave (André 1961, 252). Mother goddess and Venus Anadyomene statuettes of painted white clay, along with Roman pottery and coins, were found in the *allée couverte* Carhon as well, less than 25 kilometres north-north-east of Le

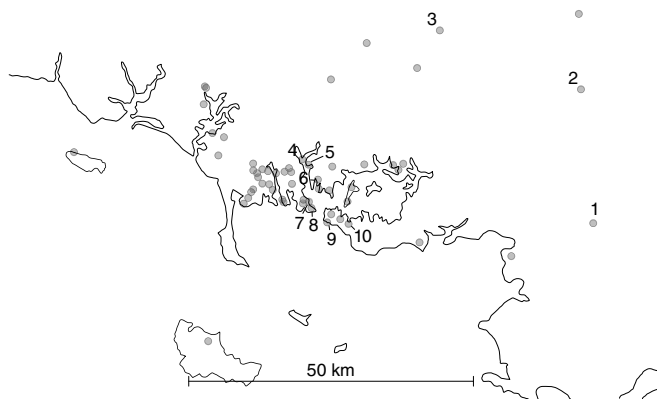


Figure 9.4. Megalithic tombs with Iron Age or Roman material in Morbihan. 1. Le Tombeau des Maîtres; 2. Carhon; 3. Migourdie; 4. Rocher; 5. Lanester; 6. Toulvern; 7. Mané Rétual; 8. Bergous; 9. Le Petit Mont; 10. D'Er Bé. Map by Mara Vejby.

Tombeau des Maîtres, and roughly 35 kilometres from the Gulf of Morbihan (André 1961, 252). Roughly 25 kilometres to the north of the bay, and less than 30 kilometres to the north-west of Carhon, is the dolmen Migourdie (André 1961, 252). Statuettes of Venus Anadyomene and Mother Goddesses, along with Roman pottery and coins (both Domitian and Germanicus), were found within this tomb (André 1961, 252; Lecornec 2001, 292; Leins et al. 2003–14). Though each of the three tombs above is (slightly) physically removed from the rest, the types of Roman deposits are not distinctive from the other seven sites along the gulf. Similar Roman pottery and coins were found in association with the majority of Venus and Mother Goddess statuettes deposited at other megalithic tombs.

The remaining sites at which Venus statuettes were uncovered are all located around the Gulf of Morbihan and Quiberon Bay. Vases (one with illegible initials) and white clay statuettes of Venus Anadyomene were found within the Lanester dolmen, which is now at the bottom of the Baie de Kerdréan (Marsille 1919, 114; André 1961, 249). White earthen statuettes, accompanied by pottery with some glossy areas and Constantine II coins (AD 317–40), were found in the dolmen Bergous 8.5 kilometres south of Lanester (André 1961, 251; Leins et al. 2003–14). The earthen statuettes may very well have been Venus statuettes, similar to the others found in this region, however, further details were not given. One hundred and fifty statuettes of Venus, Latona mother, and other goddesses, along with common

pottery, were found at a depth of 0.6 metres in the sifted yellow earth of the allée couverte D'Er Bé, seven kilometres to the south-east of Bergous (André 1961, 252). Roughly 9.5 kilometres to the north-west of D'Er Bé, on the opposite side of the Gulf of Morbihan, statuettes of Venus Anadyomene, Venus à Gaine, and Minerva, along with Roman pottery and Domitian coins (AD 81–96), were found in Toulvern (Rouzic 1902, 298; André 1961, 249; Lecornec 2001, 292; Leins et al. 2003–14).

Though the deposits found in the nearby tomb Mané Rétual, just over 4 kilometres south-west of Toulvern, are not necessarily distinct in nature from those mentioned thus far, there are many more types of materials present. *Tegulae* (Roman roofing tiles) were found accompanying earthen statuettes of Venus and Mother Goddesses, pottery vases, glass vases, marbles, spindle whorls, Constantine II coins (AD 317–40), seven Trajan (AD 98–117), and Antoninus (AD 138–61) coins (André 1961, 251; Lecornec 2001, 292; Leins et al. 2003–14). This particular site attracted deposits that extended beyond the traditional pottery and coins that seem to be so closely associated with statuettes at all the other tombs around the Gulf of Morbihan. There is only one site, dolmen Rocher, 7.5 kilometres north-west of Mané Rétual, at which figurines, in this case Venus Anadyomene, may have been found without any accompanying deposits (Bain de la Coquerie 1872, 276; André 1961, 249). It is very likely, however, that there were other items that the 1872 excavation failed to identify.

The statuettes at each of these tombs have been variously interpreted as indications that the sites were used as *fana*, *templa* or *cella*, at which ritual activities took place (Wellington 2002, 3). These terms, however, are heavily laden with modern connotations that may or may not reflect the nature of the activity at these sites. All but one of the eleven sites with Venus statuettes in France also contained Roman pottery. In addition to pottery, Roman coins were uncovered at half of the sites. However, subsequent Roman structures were not reported at any of the tombs. Though it is possible that these statuettes are indicative of ritual/cult activity, interpretations must take into account the other materials found, the history of the region, and the known Roman temples in the area.

Statuettes of Venus are the ones most commonly found at these sites, and the goddess Venus has a long and involved history. According to Livy, the cult of Venus was brought to Rome from the north-west of Sicily, where she had variously been referred to as Astarte by

the Carthaginians, Aphrodite by the Greeks, and Venus by the Romans (Erskine 2001, 198–9). Like many other gods and goddesses, there are two different stories of her origins. In one version Ouranos (Sky) was making love with Gaia (Earth) when his son Kronos ambushed and castrated him. Kronos then threw his father's genitals into the sea. Foam issued from the genitals and Aphrodite (Venus) grew within the foam. The genitals eventually washed to land at Cyprus, where the goddess stepped ashore (Hansen 2004, 105). In another version, however, Aphrodite was the daughter of Zeus and Dionè (Hansen 2004, 106). In 215 BC Fabius Maximus dedicated the temple on the Capitoline Hill to Venus, and she quickly took her place as a central goddess in Rome, ancestor of the Roman people, and part of their national heritage, particularly associated with the imperial families (Erskine 2001, 198–9).

Aeneas, the founder of the Roman race, claimed Venus as his mother. Consequently, Julius Caesar, who proclaimed himself to be a descendant of Aeneas, made light of his deified ancestry. In 67 BC Caesar claimed Venus as a part of his lineage, among other eminent ancestors, during the eulogy he delivered for his aunt Julia (Meiggs 1973, 359; Lloyd-Morgan 1986, 180; Hansen 2004, 12). Octavian later used his kinship with the self-proclaimed divine Julius Caesar, and with Venus as the celestial ancestress and patron of the family, as one of his many weapons against Brutus and the conspirators, and later against Antony and other personal enemies (Lloyd-Morgan 1986, 180). During the reign of Domitian (AD 81–96) Venus is by far the main figure found on reverses of coins generated for the ladies of the imperial family (Lloyd-Morgan 1986, 180).

Beyond the realms of direct imperial control, evidence of personal worship of Venus are found in small statuettes and dedications, in addition to literary references, throughout the empire. It is during this imperial time, both in Rome and the Roman provinces, that Venus-Aphrodite is equated with sexual love and romance (Lloyd-Morgan 1986, 182; Hansen 2004, 105–8). In addition, however, Venus-Aphrodite was also known as a protectress of sailors, possibly relating to one of her origin stories in which she emerged from sea foam (Fox 1930, 196; Lloyd-Morgan 1986, 184; Hansen 2004, 105). This background on the importance of Venus in the empire should be considered while forming interpretations as to the meaning of the figurines found at these megalithic tombs.

The historical background of the Morbihan region may further add to our interpretation of this subsequent Roman activity. In 56 BC a

Roman fleet, led by Julius Caesar, defeated the naval ships of the Veneti, as well as other tribes from Gaul and Britain who had allied themselves with the Veneti. Once the battle ended Caesar ordered all leaders put to death and everyone else sold as slaves (Holmes 1914, *Comm. III*, 16). This crushing defeat would not only have devastated the local Veneti, but it was also the final battle in the Roman conquest of western Gaul. Though the Romans had been strengthening their control over this territory, against repeated rebellions, the outcome of this battle secured its subjugation. It is thought that the naval battle took place on Quiberon Bay, off the Gulf of Morbihan. Lecornec names three sites from which this battle may have been visible from land: Tumiac, Le Grand Mont à Saint Gildas de Rhuys, and Le Petit Mont (Lecornec 1994, 94).

Interestingly, Tumiac is also referred to as 'La Butte de César', though it is not the only megalithic tomb in the area to which the name Caesar has become attached. Despite this alias, and the local legend that Caesar stood on top of this mound and watched the naval battle of 56 BC, no Roman artefacts or features were found at this tomb when it was excavated by the Société Polymathique du Morbihan in 1853 (Bender and Caillaud 1986, 126; Cope 2004, 100). Furthermore, Tumiac is positioned 1.5 kilometres as the crow flies from the southernmost part of the gulf, and 0.75 kilometres from the Bay of Quiberon (Lecornec 1994, 95). As such, Lecornec points out that it is too centrally located along the peninsula to have been an effective point from which to watch the battle. From the top of Le Grand Mont à Saint Gildas de Rhuys, less than five kilometres to the south-east, one can see all of the Bay of Quiberon, with the exception of the entrance to the gulf, which is blocked by Le Petit Mont (Lecornec 1994, 94). Some 150 fragments of white earthenware statuettes were uncovered at this tomb, however, they have yet to be studied so further details are not available (Lecornec 2001, 292). Le Petit Mont, on the other hand, is unique not only because of its location, but because of the Roman-period deposits found within.

Located on the Pointe du Petit Mont, south-west of Arzon, on the granite cliff of the Presqu'île de Rhuys, Le Petit Mont is ideally positioned along the peninsula with views from the mouth of the River Vilaine in the south-east all the way to Carnac and Quiberon in the west (Daniel 1960, 274). Because of the very strong currents of the gulf, it would likely have been impossible to stabilize the Roman

galleys and fight at the same time. It has therefore been suggested that the battle took place on the large bay of Kerjouanno (Lecornec 1994, 95). From the top of the 6- to 7-metre-high tall cairn of Le Petit Mont there is an amazing view of nearly all of Morbihan, filled with other megalithic structures (Briard 1991, 4; Lecornec 1994, 13) (Figure 9.5). The Romans' victory over the Veneti would have been highly visible from this location, after which the tomb may have become something of a shrine or place of remembrance, for either the victors or the vanquished, of the battle that occurred (Lecornec 1994, 95; 2001, 292; Chadwick and Gibson 2013).

In addition to its prime location, Le Petit Mont also contained the most extensive evidence of Roman reuse out of all the megalithic tombs on the peninsula. It also appears that subsequent interactions with Le Petit Mont were previously a part of this site's biography during the Early Iron Age, over 100 years before the Roman invasion. Fragments of a first-century BC blue bracelet with white and yellow bands were discovered at the site in 1888. A blue La Tène bead was also uncovered, dating roughly to the fourth century BC, the beginning of the Iron Age (Lecornec 1994, 68–9).

In terms of Roman-period materials, a fair amount of pottery was found, but approximately 95 per cent was common brown or brown-black pots, leading Lecornec to argue that the population reusing the site was not very stable, as implied by the relative lack of *sigillata* pottery (Lecornec 1994, 70). The rest of the Roman material could indicate that the tomb was reused during the Gallo-Roman period as a *fanum* or sanctuary.

Nearly 600 fragments of white earthenware Venus Anadyomene and Mother Goddess statuettes were found in the passage, at the entrance to the chamber, and along the outside of the mound (Rouzic 1912, 118; Jousselandière and Marsille 1928, 21; Daniel 1960, 217; André 1961,



Figure 9.5. Le Petit Mont megalithic tomb (Arzon, Morbihan). Drawing by Robin Dorn. © Mara Vejby.

249; Briard 1991, 4; Lecnec 1994, 71; 2001) (Figure 9.3). Potter's stamps, designs, and decorations on the statuettes indicate that they were produced by Rextvgenos, whose statuettes are commonly found in north-west Gaul, between the end of the first century and beginning of the second century AD, after the naval battle off the coast (René 1981, 301; Bémont et al. 1993; Lecnec 1994, 73; 2001, 290; Talvas 2010). Some small Gaulish bronze coins were found during Cussé's excavations, but they were never identified and have since been lost. Two Breton coins of Veneti type Brech, five unidentified Breton coins, and a Turones coin from the second half of the first century AD were found during Lecnec's excavations (Lecnec 1994, 70).

A Roman stone altar was also found at the entrance to the tomb, with a dedication that appears on the anterior side (Figure 9.6)



Figure 9.6. Roman altar from Le Petit Mont (Arzon, Morbihan). Drawing by Robin Dorn. © Mara Vejby.

(Lecornec 1994, 75). Unfortunately, the upper portion has been completely defaced and all that remains is:

... R.V.
... INVS
... PRO.
Q.SABIN
FIL VSLM

The last two lines can be deciphered as: QVINTVS SABINUS FILIVS VOTVM SOLVIT LIBENS MERITO ('the son of Quintus Sabinus has accomplished his vows freely and justly'). Lecornec believes that the Quintus Sabinus referenced on this altar may be General Quintus Sabinus, who led the campaign against the Veneti, and that his son might have fought as a member of a legion (Lecornec 1994, 76). The placement of this altar at the entrance to the tomb must have been a particularly deliberate and meaningful act, and was likely associated with the other activity at that site, and at other nearby tombs. Unfortunately, Le Petit Mont was considerably damaged by the Germans between 1939 and 1945 in order to form part of a concrete block-house (Daniel 1960, 274). Though this more modern chapter of the tomb's biography destroyed a portion of the site, Neolithic pottery and axes, as well as faint engravings, were still recovered from inside this passage grave (Bender and Caillaud 1986, 126; Briard 1991, 4).

DISCUSSING THE EVIDENCE AND PIECING TOGETHER THE PAST

The reuse of Le Petit Mont in particular was clearly intentional and, therefore, meaningful, as indicated by the deposits, the altar, and the location of the tomb, all of which seem to connect its reuse to the naval battle. The similar Roman deposits found at the other tombs, also all concentrated along the gulf, may imply the significance of a larger area or landscape. It is generally accepted that the final battle fought by the Veneti and their allies against the Romans took place off the coast of Morbihan, even though the exact location of the battle continues to be controversial. The sheer scale and significance of the event makes it one that would have lived in the minds of the people who inhabited the region for centuries to come.

It is important to remember that the statuette deposits discussed here are a part of a much larger pattern of megalithic tomb reuse in the region, with a distribution that centres on the Gulf of Morbihan. Attempting to narrowly date the subsequent activity at all of these megalithic tombs is therefore important before speculating further on the significance of these interactions. Unfortunately, dates are only available from Roman coins found at nine tombs (six of which also contained Venus statuettes): Tressé, Migourdie, Toulvern, Moustoir, Mané Rétual, Mané er Hroëk, Bergous, Le Petit Mont, and Bruté. The majority of these tombs are located along the coast of Quiberon Bay (the three exceptions being Bruté, Migourdie, and Tressé).

The mint date ranges from these coins confirm that the vast majority must have been deposited sometime after the naval victory of the Roman fleet in 56 BC (Figure 9.7), a relatively late period for Gallo-Roman reuse (Lecornec 2001, 294). These dates allow for the possibility that the Roman period interactions may, in fact, be associated with the battle on this bay. However, there are many other variables affecting the interpretations of this evidence.

The fact that Morbihan, in which the vast majority of reused tombs in Atlantic Europe are located, was the site of such a pivotal battle could very likely have influenced these interactions with prehistoric tombs. When making this speculation it is important to keep in mind that very little direct evidence of Iron Age interaction has been found at tombs in Brittany. Additionally, Morbihan is not the only region of Brittany with megalithic tombs, but it is definitely the one with the

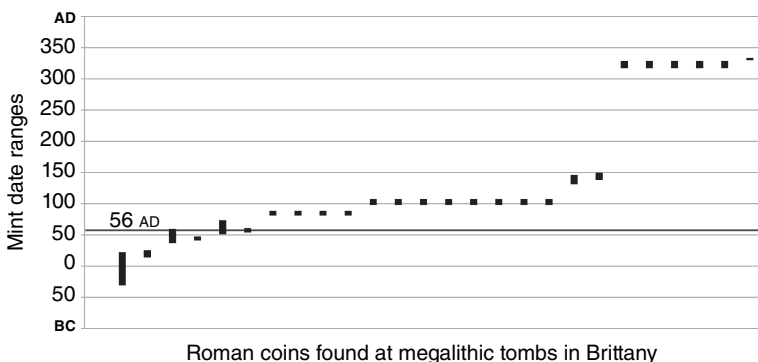


Figure 9.7. Mint dates of Roman coins from megalithic tombs in Brittany. Graph by Mara Vejby.

highest concentration of Roman-period reuse. Secondly, the relatively high occurrence of Venus statuettes may signify an importance of that deity within the area. At this point it would be difficult to argue that the nature of reuse at these sites did not involve some spiritual/ritual component, whatever that might have been. The significance of Venus within the Roman Empire has been summarized above, and might point more towards the reuse of these sites being Roman in nature, rather than the Gaulish use of Roman materials. It is also possible, however, that the statuettes represent a co-option of a Roman iconic figure by a native group, who then placed these physical representations at and within Neolithic structures around Quiberon Bay. The meanings of these deposits would then have carried alternate connotations, especially given their contexts and the locations of these sites.

Is it a coincidence that around a bay known for its treacherous waters, and at which a famous naval battle took place, there would be a high concentration of Venus statuettes placed as votive offerings? Could this be related to Venus' role as a guardian of mariners? It is possible that Julius Caesar's claim on Venus as an ancestor is not related to the deposit of statuettes around a battle site at which he won a decisive victory for Rome. However, at this point, we cannot rule out this possibility. The remaining question, then, is, were these deposits being made by Romans or by local Gauls? If these are Roman deposits, then we can assume a certain level of Roman cultural fluency with respect to the symbolic meaning of the figurines at these sites. The act of deposition at these tombs would also represent a co-option and reinterpretation of these prehistoric structures, likely without the benefit of any associated folklore or significance/superstitions that would have been common knowledge to the local population. If, on the other hand, these deposits represent Gaulish interactions, they would still signify a reinterpretation of these prehistoric structures. However, it is likely that these sites had already been reinterpreted over the thousands of years since their construction, despite the relative lack of Iron Age materials at these tombs. It is even possible that these structures had been intentionally avoided during their subsequent lives.

Until recently, the most common description of Iron Age or Roman material at megalithic tombs has been that they were 'lost items'. Such an explanation for subsequent materials found in the cairns or mounds of a single site might seem plausible. However, in

the context of a pattern of similar deposits at a collection of megalithic tombs, including instances where the subsequent material has been found within the tomb passages and chambers themselves, such an explanation seems insufficient. An alternative explanation for the Roman period materials at a couple of sites, particularly in Brittany, has been that some megalithic tombs were reused as Roman shrines or temples (Jousselandière and Marsille 1928, 21; André 1961, 249; Gruet 1967, 56, 94, 250, 318; Briard 1991, 4; Lecornec 1994, 71). While this analysis extends significance to the subsequent materials, which the previous explanation lacks, the collected evidence may not perfectly fit this account for subsequent activity either. It also raises new questions such as: why were megalithic tombs seen as an appropriate place to deposit these items, and what made them suitable 'votive sanctuaries' for Venus?

Though many of the materials found at these megalithic tombs, such as Roman coins, statuettes, and pottery, are also commonly found at Roman temples and shrines in the area, they are not found in as great a quantity as at temple sites (Fauduet 1993a, 125–6; Lecornec 2001, 289). There are also shrine materials that are noticeably missing from tomb sites, including tablets with inscriptions and other 'cult accessories' such as small bells or metal amulets/votive offerings (Fauduet 1993a, 125; 1993b, 148–9). Additionally, Roman shrines/temples in Brittany are not concentrated along the Gulf of Morbihan, but have a higher concentration to the north-east, closer to the *civitas* Rennes (Fauduet 1993a, 26). The reuse of these tombs does not, therefore, appear to be a part of a high concentration of shrine activity in the area. Furthermore, there are a few sanctuaries that do exist around the gulf, so it is unlikely that the reuse of these sites was meant as a replacement for the construction of shrines (Fauduet 1993a, 26).

These observations about the distribution of temples/shrines, coupled with the material deposits at these sites, seem to indicate a reuse that was regionally distinctive. In the case of the megalithic tombs around the Gulf of Morbihan the subsequent activities appear to have intentionally made the older structures a part of the reinterpretation of a physical landscape (Bradley 2002; Chadwick and Gibson 2013). This interaction with the distant past may have been somehow related to, or done in an effort to remember, a much more recent past, namely the naval battle at Quiberon Bay. Thus the extended biographies of these tombs act to record the cultural

biographies that violently clashed in the region during the course of the Roman conquest of Gaul.

The increase in interactions during the Roman period, and the geographic concentration around the bay seem to imply some connection to the final battle against the Roman army. It again becomes a question of who was making these deposits. In some ways the argument that these deposits represent the Gaulish use of Roman materials in order to interact with local prehistoric sites might be slightly more compelling, because the outcome of the battle would have given this location a more traumatic significance for the Veneti and other Gaulish tribes than for the occupying Romans. Local Gauls also would have possessed knowledge of the prehistoric structures in the vicinity. It might even add credence to Lecornec's speculation that the deposits were being made by a population that was not very stable (Lecornec 1994, 70). If this is the case, and these deposits represent Gaulish interactions, then the Venus statuettes may not necessarily have been seen as specifically Venus statuettes, but rather more generally as female goddess figurines. This could explain the presence of other goddesses at these sites. In fact, although all of the tombs with statuettes contained Venus statuettes (the one possible exception being Bergous where they are only described as 'statuettes en terre blanche'), only three of the tombs (Lanester, Le Tombeau des Maîtres, and Rocher) contained exclusively Venus statuettes. The rest also contained Mother Goddess figurines, most of which are of white earthen clay. At Toulvern the other statuettes are of Minerva (Rouzic 1902, 298; André 1961, 249; Lecornec 2001, 292; Leins et al. 2003–14).

The Roman altar at Le Petit Mont is the strongest piece of evidence pointing to a Roman rather than Gaulish interaction. In Lecornec's account of the altar he describes how there are several shallow holes in the surface of the entablement, which may have been used to place statuettes or a larger versally statue (Lecornec 1994, 775). If the statuettes found at Le Petit Mont are in fact related to the altar in this way, it would support the theory that this prehistoric tomb became a centre for Roman attention, perhaps as a result of its location along the bay. It is crucial to recall, however, that Le Petit Mont is one of the megalithic tombs at which Iron Age deposits have also been found. Assuming that this site bore a pre-existing Iron Age significance, the placement of a Roman altar could then instead be interpreted as a response to this Gaulish attention, and an attempt to exert control over a symbolically important local site.

The deposit of statuettes at megalithic tombs in the vicinity of Le Petit Mont might then be a generalized result of this attempt to 'conquer' a prehistoric site. What began as a cultural usurpation of a local site of significance, through the erection of an altar and the deposition of other important Roman materials, may then have been generalized to other similar site-types within the vicinity. It was in this way that Roman statuettes, coins, and pottery began to be more widely deposited within the immediate area, concentrating along the Gulf of Morbihan.

We may never know for sure which side of the cultural power struggle these deposits represent. Were they a manipulation of a conqueror's material culture being used at important local sites as acts of remembrance or defiance, or are they the evidence of the usurpation of important local places in a continued attempt to control and subjugate a conquered population? In either case, these interactions became part of the living biographies of these prehistoric tombs, and are evidence of their continued reinterpretation within the shifting cultural landscapes of this region.

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The Outstanding Biographies of Prehistoric Monuments in Iron Age, Roman, and Medieval Spain

Leonardo García Sanjuán and Marta Díaz-Guardamino

INTRODUCTION

Over the last decade, new questions have emerged with regard to the complex temporal patterns often seen in Iberian prehistoric monuments. A number of megalithic chamber tombs, menhirs, stelae or rock-art panels have been found to show that, as occurs in other European regions, their lives were not restricted to the period of time in which they were built or manufactured, but, on the contrary, they extended well into later (or even much later) prehistoric, proto-historic and subsequent historical periods. Evidence for this includes successive physical transformations through the incorporation of new architectural or graphic elements and/or through the reorganization of previously existing ones, the accumulation of mnemonic artefacts, as well as layouts and orientations in special landscape settings (Díaz-Guardamino 2006; 2008; 2010; 2012; 2015; García Sanjuán et al. 2008; Lillios 2008; García Sanjuán and Wheatley 2010; García Sanjuán 2011; Aranda Jiménez 2013).

In this chapter we attempt to show that some prehistoric monuments built or made in the Neolithic, Copper Age and Bronze Age played active roles in the social life of communities considered ‘proto-historic’ or ‘historic’. To achieve this, we first examine a series of monuments with ‘outstanding biographies’, which document single reuse or repeated and/or persistent use during the Iron Age, Antiquity and/or the Middle Ages (Figure 10.1). We will then try to establish

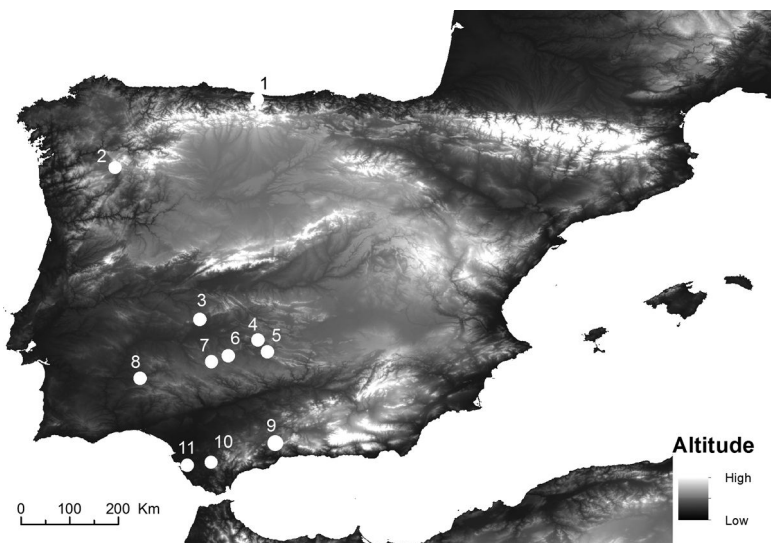


Figure 10.1. Main sites discussed in the text: 1. Peñatú; 2. Muiño de San Pedro; 3. Ibañerando; 4. Chillón; 5. La Bienvenida; 6. Majada Honda; 7. Cancho Roano; 8. Capote; 9. Menga and Viera; 10. Alberite I; 11. Pocito Chico. Map by Marta Díaz-Guardamino.

some conclusions in relation to the social practices that may have led to such uses or reuses of prehistoric monuments that were thousands of years old by the time they were reinterpreted, rediscovered or reinvented.

MEGALITHIC FUNERARY MONUMENTS

Although this is a subject that has only been seriously researched over the last decade, the list of Iberian megalithic chamber tombs used in the Iron Age, in Antiquity and in the Middle Ages is now quite substantial (e.g. Caamaño Gesto and Criado Boado 1992; Lorrio Alvarado and Montero Ruiz 2004; García Sanjuán 2005a; 2005b; García Sanjuán et al. 2008; Álvarez Vidaurre 2011). There is varied evidence supporting these cases of reuse. It includes the physical transformation of funerary monuments, the engraving of graphic symbols or inscriptions, as well as their use as burial sites, including the deposition of grave goods and human remains. In southern Iberia, for instance, there is

currently a series of sixteen radiocarbon dates (twelve of which were obtained on human bone) (Table 10.1), dating events of this sort. Given the space limitations herein, we will examine two examples that we believe are particularly illustrative of this cultural phenomenon: the dolmens of Menga and Viera in Antequera (Málaga) and the megalithic monument of Alberite I (Villamartín, Cádiz).

As shown in recent works, those of Antequera can be counted among the most impressive examples of Spanish megaliths with exceptionally complex biographies (García Sanjuán and Lozano Rodríguez forthcoming-a). In the case of Viera, usage during the Copper Age and Bronze Age is attested through radiocarbon dating (Aranda Jiménez et al. 2013). In addition to this, the excavations carried out by the University of Granada in 2005 and 2006 (almost all unpublished) refer to the discovery of pottery and other materials from the Iron Age in both megaliths. Although the details of the contexts of these finds are unknown, they do not seem to be associated with burials. Furthermore, the team from the University of Málaga, which excavated Menga and Viera between the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, reported various Roman graves documented on and within the surroundings of both their tumuli (Ferrer Palma 1997a, 143; 1997b, 356; Ferrer Palma et al. 2004, 207; Marqués Merelo et al. 2004, 184). Unfortunately, a detailed description of these graves has never been published, and a number of important details remain therefore unknown. The available information suggests that at least eight graves were identified, one of which currently remains unexcavated on the right-hand side of the Viera dolmen passage, embedded in its tumulus (Fernández Rodríguez and Romero Pérez 2007, 416). These Roman graves can probably be related to the Carnicería de Los Moros settlement, which is located only a few hundred metres from both megaliths. This settlement was part of the intense occupation that the region experienced in Antiquity and for which Antikaria (Antequera itself), Singilia Barba and Aratispi are clear exponents. The Roman graves were dated by the excavators to the end of the fifth century and the sixth century AD (Ferrer Palma 1997a, 136), although the total absence of grave goods and radiocarbon dates makes it very difficult to establish this point.

Subsequently, during excavations carried out in 2005, two inhumations in simple pits without any type of stone architecture were discovered in the atrium of Menga (Figure 10.2). These two individuals had no grave goods and were arranged in line with the monument's

Table 10.1. Iron Age, Roman, and Medieval C14 dates from megalithic contexts of southern Iberia.

Site	Province	BP	Lab Ref.	BC/AD (2 σ)	Sample	Reference
Palacio III	Sevilla	2660 $\pm$ 90	Beta-165552	1050–400 BC	human bone	García Sanjuán, 2005b
El Pozuelo	Huelva	2595 $\pm$ 75	Teledyne-19078	912–418 BC	human bone	Nocete Calvo et al., 2004
El Barranquete (Tomb 11)	Almería	2570 $\pm$ 100	CSIC-201b	900–400 BC	human bone	Almagro Gorbea, 1973
Loma de la Gorriquia	Almería	2300 $\pm$ 35	Beta-184196	414–206 BC	human bone	Lorrio Alvarado and Montero Ruiz, 2004
Loma de los Caporchanes	Almería	1850 $\pm$ 50	Beta-171807	53–322 AD	human bone	Lorrio Alvarado and Montero Ruiz, 2004
Aldeia de Bertiaandos (Tomb 6)	Alentejo	1872 $\pm$ 40	Beta-196092	236–414 AD	human bone	Rocha y Duarte, 2009
Valle de las Higueras	Toledo	1550 $\pm$ 40	Beta-227817	422–596 AD	charred material	Bueno Ramírez et al., 2010
Loma de las Alparatas	Almería	1450 $\pm$ 50	Beta-171806	443–668 AD	human bone	Lorrio Alvarado and Montero Ruiz, 2004
Menga	Málaga	1250 $\pm$ 35	CNA-1174	676–871 AD	human bone	Díaz-Zorita Bonilla and García Sanjuán, 2012
Menga	Málaga	1100 $\pm$ 45	CNA-1173	783–1022 AD	human bone	Díaz-Zorita Bonilla and García Sanjuán, 2012
São Gens 1	Alentejo	890 $\pm$ 40	Beta-234137	1030–1222 AD	human bone	Boaventura, 2009
El Barranquete (Tomb 11)	Almería	840 $\pm$ 100	CSIC-201a	995–1382 AD	human bone	Almagro Gorbea, 1973
Mascotejo	Huelva	835 $\pm$ 40	CNA-343	1051–1273 AD	charred material	Linares Catela and García Sanjuán, 2010
Alberite I	Cádiz	810 $\pm$ 40	CNA-2277.1.2	1163–1273 AD	human bone	This paper
Santa Margarida 3	Alentejo	730 $\pm$ 40	Beta-166419	1210–1390 AD	plant remains	Boaventura, 2009
Santa Margarida 3	Alentejo	560 $\pm$ 40	Beta-166424	1300–1440 AD	plant remains	Boaventura, 2009



Figure 10.2. Medieval inhumations at the atrium of Menga. Photograph by Juan Moreno.

axis of symmetry, in a right lateral decubitus position and with the head facing south-west. The anthropological study and radiocarbon analysis of the human remains (Díaz-Zorita Bonilla and García Sanjuán 2012) revealed that they were two mature men (> forty years) that died between the seventh and tenth centuries AD (Table 10.1). The use of Menga as a sacred place in the Middle Ages may also have been graphically recorded: engraved on the third orthostat on the left-hand side (as you enter), Menga has four cruciform motifs, and at least two of these have been interpreted as Christian crosses or as the Christianization of prehistoric anthropomorphic motifs (Bueno Ramírez et al. forthcoming). There is currently no secure way of dating these crosses. One plausible hypothesis is that they were related in some way to the Christianization process that took place in the Antequera region after the Castilian conquest during the fifteenth century AD. In AD 1587, the prebendary of Granada's Cathedral, Agustín de Tejada Páez, wrote a manuscript entitled *Discursos Históricos de Antequera* in which, providing an account of 'some antiquities and curiosities' in his city, he referred to a 'cave' called Menga, which was made by hand and must have been a nocturnal temple where heathens came at night to perform sacrifices (Sánchez-Cuenca López 2011, 15). By the late sixteenth century AD, the official stand of the Catholic Church

had deemed Menga (and probably Viera) a site of strongly negative ideological connotations (García Sanjuán and Lozano Rodríguez forthcoming-a; forthcoming-b).

Alberite I is another fine example of a megalithic monument with an outstanding biography. The initial study of this dolmen, based on the excavations carried out in 1993, included three radiocarbon dates on charred material that dated its possible construction and primary use to between 4330 and 3600 cal. BC 2σ (Ramos Muñoz et al. 1996, 359). In the absence of a serious old-wood effect, these dates would make Alberite I one of the oldest megalithic monuments known in southern Iberia. Afterwards, another excavation carried out in 1997 led to the discovery of various semicircular stone alignments at the southern end of the perimeter ring of the megalith, one of which had a lime-plaster floor attached to it. Although these structures were not further explored, the associated materials (wheel-thrown pottery and amphorae, metallic objects and animal bones) led the excavators to believe these could be domestic structures from the Iron Age, provisionally dated to the sixth and seventh centuries BC (Gutiérrez López 2001, 139). These excavations also documented two Turdetanian cups (from the second Iron Age) placed in between the orthostats, although they were in very bad condition and their association with possible cremations could not be ascertained.

The Alberite I dolmen was used as a cemetery in the Middle Ages. During the 1993 excavation, two graves were discovered, belonging to a partially preserved young woman and an older male. They were situated at the beginning of the passage, in a right-lateral decubitus position and facing south-east, on a fallen capstone (Gómez Sánchez 1996, 245–9). In the 1997 excavations eleven more graves considered to be Medieval were found, including eight on the tumulus and three on the atrium (Gutiérrez López 2001, 138–9). A third excavation (also unpublished) carried out in 2004, as a result of the construction of a roof for the monument, revealed three new burials, which, together with a chance discovery, brings the total number of Medieval bodies buried on or around the tumulus of the Alberite I dolmen to seventeen. These corpses, all facing south-east, are situated, without exception, on the south side of the mound, while none appeared on the north side. The radiocarbon date CNA-2277.1.2 obtained by us recently—and which is presented here for the first time—from a sample of human bones (left femur) from individual

no. 3 of those excavated in 2004, provided a result of 810 ± 40 BP or 1163–1273 cal. AD 2σ , which dates it to the Almohad Period (AD 1146–1264) (Table 10.1).

Altogether, direct and indirect evidence suggests that the reuse of the Alberite I dolmen as a burial ground during the Almohad period was conscious and deliberate. On the one hand, one of the burials was found on top of one of the capstones of the passage, which makes it hard to believe that the presence of the megalith went unnoticed. On the other hand, the spatial arrangement of the graves on the south side of the tumulus is clearly the result of positioning the graves as new burials took place. Finally, the proven existence of an *alquería* (farmstead) from the Almohad period in the surroundings of the dolmen also has to be taken into account (Gutiérrez López 2001, 140). These arguments suggest that, thousands of years later, the seventeen Medieval burials gave purposeful continuity to the Neolithic monument's original funerary and/or sacred significance.

STELAE, STATUE-MENHIRS, AND ROCK ART

The cases of reuse of prehistoric stelae, statue-menhirs and rock-art panels in Iron Age, Roman, and Medieval Iberia documented until now are not abundant but diverse. Despite this diversity, there is evidence to suggest that, in general, these monuments or sites were reused precisely *because* they held significance at the time.

During the Iron Age, some of the most interesting cases of reuse involved stelae that were part of a Late Bronze Age tradition that survived as a 'living' custom until the beginning of the Iron Age in southern Iberia (Díaz-Guardamino 2012, 408–9, tbl.4). It is precisely in this region, at the site of Pocito Chico (El Puerto de Santa María, Cádiz), where we document an early case of reuse involving the radical transformation and reinterpretation of one of these monuments. Here, a Late Bronze Age stela was reused, first for crushing and grinding, and then as construction material, concealed in the fabric of a wall of a large semi-underground hut whose construction has been broadly attributed to the Late Bronze Age (Ruiz Gil and López Amador 2001, 153–5). According to the excavators, this structure was ritually 'condemned' before the eighth century BC, a date that draws on the relative chronology of the materials documented in the

filling, but which is not fully in accordance with the C14 dates obtained from samples of the same filling (Table 10.2).

A remarkable case is that of the Late Bronze Age stelae from Capote and Majada Honda (Badajoz), located more than 150 kilometres away from each other, which were reused during the Early Iron Age (ninth to fifth centuries BC) (Berrocal Rangel 1987; Domínguez de la Concha et al. 2005, 36–7, 52–4; Díaz-Guardamino 2012, tbl.4) (Figure 10.3). The manipulation followed the exact same procedure in both cases: first, the upper part of the monolith was fragmented, some of their earlier engravings being removed or destroyed in the process, to give both a similar size (c. 1 metre). In addition, both were turned upside down in order to engrave, on what had been before their lower part, two inscriptions in the so-called ‘south-western’ or ‘tartessian’ script—the earliest form of writing known in Iberia—(Table 10.3) and, possibly, a human figure with arms stretched upwards situated in front of the chariot of the original composition. Among the approximately 140 Late Bronze Age stelae known to date, no other anthropomorphic figure of these characteristics has been documented in front of the chariot, which suggests that this figure may be coeval to the making of the inscriptions.

These reuses may have had a funerary significance. Although the ‘south-western’ script has not been fully decoded yet, most specialists agree on the funerary nature of these inscriptions, known on a number of epigraphic stelae in the south-west, since they repeat a standard formula (Correia 1996; Untermann 1997, 131). These epigraphic stelae, part of a new tradition developed between the eighth/seventh to fifth centuries BC, are frequently associated with Iron Age cist necropolises. Their dating remains controversial, for the only examples that have been found in datable contexts were reused in the fabric of cists (Untermann 1997, 132–3). When found, the stela of Capote was reused as a lintel of a pigsty, but near this location there is a possible cremation necropolis dated around the fifth century BC

Table 10.2. C14 dates obtained from the filling of the Late Bronze Age hut of Pocito Chico (El Puerto de Santa María, Cádiz) (Ruiz Gil & López Amador 2001).

BP	Lab Ref.	BC (2 σ)	Sample
3350 $\pm$ 80	UGRA-551	1444–1025 BC	shell
2540 $\pm$ 100	UGRA-550	891–403 BC	bone
2340 $\pm$ 100	UGRA-549	766–201 BC	charcoal

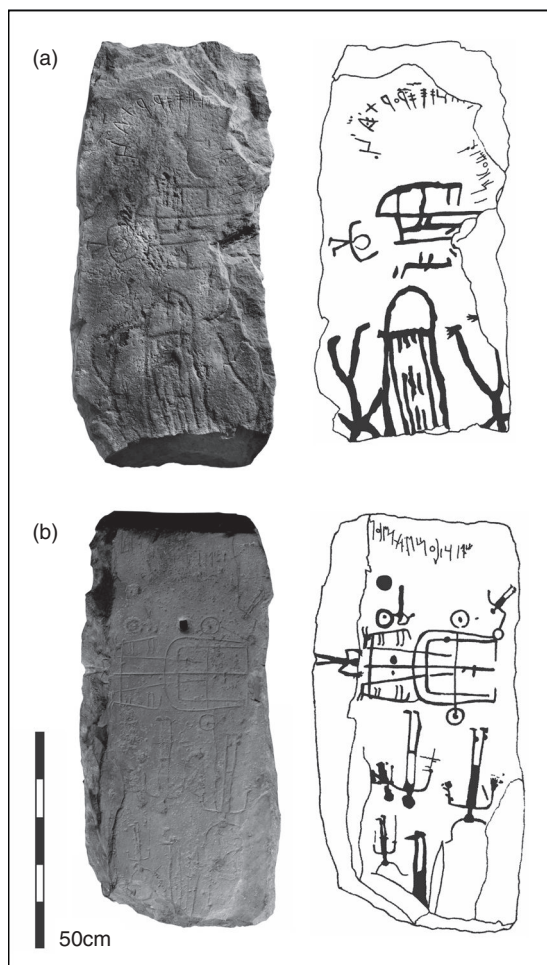


Figure 10.3. Late Bronze Age stelae of (a) Capote and (b) Majada Honda (Badajoz), reused during the Early Iron Age as epigraphic stelae with inscriptions in ‘south-western’ script. Photographs by Vicente Novillo. Drawings by Marta Díaz-Guardamino after Domínguez de la Concha et al. 2005.

(Berrocal Rangel 1987, 195, 204, note 45). Epigraphic stelae with ‘south-western’ script may also be spatially associated with necropolises and stelae from the Bronze Age (Coelho 1975, 196; Murillo Redondo et al. 2005, 17–19).

The structured reuse of these two stelae suggests that shared concepts regarding the meaning and function of old stelae from the

Late Bronze Age lived on among the Iron Age communities of the region. This may also be evidence of the indigenous nature of the communities that adopted the 'south-western' script and of the possible active role of Late Bronze Age stelae as an inspiring source of the new tradition of epigraphic stelae.

In this context, in which local communities of the south-west were reinterpreting ancient traditions, there is a significant case, which is intentionally made obvious. This is the reuse of a Late Bronze Age stela as the first step of the access staircase at the main entrance of the 'orientalizing' palace-sanctuary of Cancho Roano (Zalamea de la Serena, Badajoz). This reuse constitutes a rather strong statement about the significance of these decorated stones, for the dressed side of the stela now served as a stepping surface, and the stela itself was set as the main threshold that would be stepped onto when accessing the building. The palace-sanctuary of Cancho Roano is composed of a series of superimposed architectural structures (Celestino Pérez 2001b, 20–7). The entrance, dated to the fifth century BC, constitutes the last phase. The stela may have been related to the oldest episode of activity documented on the site (Cancho Roano D), which includes an accumulation of stones, a possible hut or a ritual structure, dated to around the seventh century BC (Celestino Pérez 2001a, 387; 2001b, 21, 54; Jiménez Ávila 2009, 71–3). Up to three superimposed structures were built on this accumulation of stones, each one more monumental than the last and all showing features of oriental architecture. This is significant if we consider the context of social interaction with the Mediterranean in which the populations of southern Iberia, particularly the elites, were involved at the time.

The cases documented during the Roman period recall the practices of reuse of the Iron Age. Two Late Bronze Age stelae, Chillón (Ciudad Real) and Ibahernando (Cáceres), were reused as funerary epigraphic stelae during the first century AD in the south of the Iberian central plateau. Both of them were found in connection with rural necropolises (in the case of Ibahernando, next to a Medieval chapel) and include indigenous names (Díaz-Guardamino 2006, 24–5; García Sanjuán et al. 2008, 7–8; García Sanjuán 2011: 95–6). In Chillón the previously existing iconography was respected and incorporated in the new stela, while the inscription indicates that the father of the deceased was called Toutonius (Figure 10.4.a; Table 10.3) (Fernández Ochoa and Zarzalejos Prieto 1993; Gómez Pantoja 2000, 16164). On the stela of Ibahernando the Bronze Age iconography was

partially superimposed by the new epigraph, and both the deceased and his father had native Celtic names (Alluquius and Protaeidus) (Figure 10.4.b; Table 10.3) (Callejo Serrano 1962, 296; Gómez Pantoja 2000, 24320; Harrison 2004, 211). In the north-west of Iberia (Muíño de San Pedro, Ourense), there is a Bronze Age statue-menhir, which was reused as a funerary epigraphic monument in the first century AD, respecting the previous anthropomorphic representation. Again, both the name of the deceased and that of his father are Celtic (Latronus and Celtiatus) (Table 10.3) (Taboada Cid 1988–9; Gómez Pantoja 2000, 15343; Fariña Busto 2002).

The counterpoint is provided by the Late Bronze Age stelae of La Bienvenida 3 and 4, found in the Roman city of Sisapo (Ciudad Real), where there are remains of Late Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements, and which was ‘occupied’ during the second century BC to become the cinnabar production centre of Roman Hispania. Of the two stelae, only two fragments were discovered that were reused as building material (concealed) in the ‘*domus* of the red columns’, whose construction dates to the first century AD (Zarzalejos Prieto et al. 2011, 395–8). The parallelism with Cancho Roano can be seen in the elitist nature of these buildings, both associated with a local aristocracy keen on connecting itself with foreign styles. Although the reuse of stelae in

Table 10.3. Epigraphs in ‘south-western’ script and Latin script engraved on Late Bronze Age stelae and a Bronze Age statue-menhir.

Stela	Province	Epigraph	Date	Reference
Capote	Badajoz	[+ik(e)ei+/[----] uosort(a)au[.]+IK(e)en+a+/[----] uosort(a)at(e)e	8th–5th centuries BC 8th–5th centuries BC	Untermann 1997, J.54.1 Domínguez de la Concha et al. 2005, 37
Majada Honda	Badajoz	[k(i)iu (c.3) k(e)e]i≥la≥ k(e)eis;a≥nWk(e)en[	8th–5th centuries BC	Domínguez de la Concha et al. 2005, 52–4
Muíño de San Pedro	Ourense	Latroni/us Celt/iati f(ilius)/h(ic) s(itus) e(st)	1st century AD	Gómez Pantoja 2000, 15343
Ibahernando	Cáceres	Alluquiu(s)/Protaeidi • f(ilius) •/hece • stius (=situs)	1st century AD	Gómez Pantoja 2000, 24320
Chillón	Ciudad Real	Procul/us Touto/ni f(ilius) an(norum) XL h(ic)/s(itus) e(st) s(it) t(ibi) t(erra) l(evis)	1st century AD	Gómez Pantoja 2000, 16164

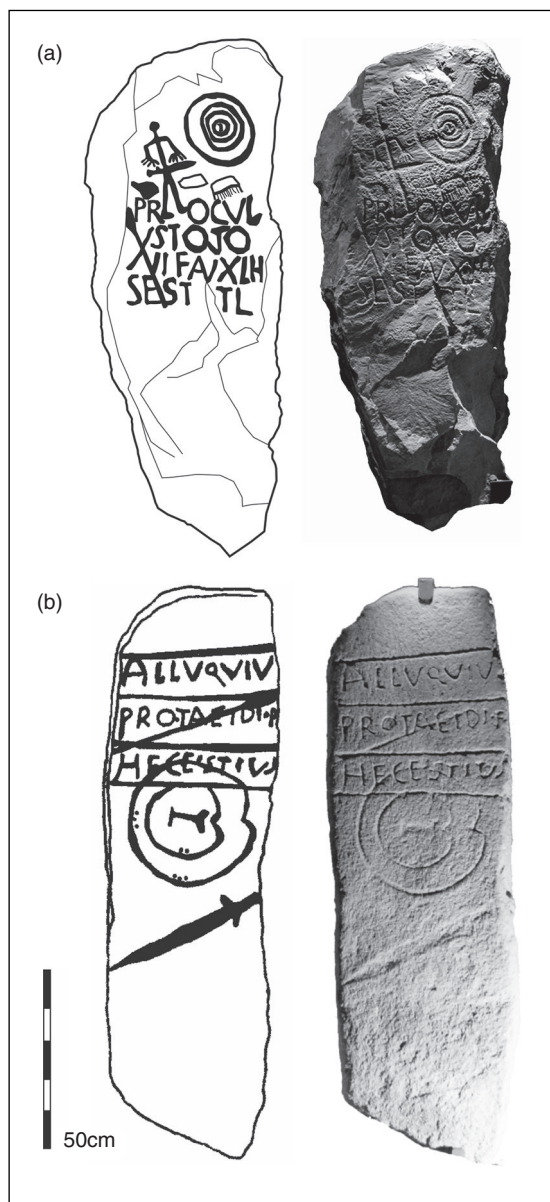


Figure 10.4. Late Bronze Age stelae of (a) Chillón (Ciudad Real) and (b) Ibahernando (Cáceres), reused as funerary epigraphic stelae with inscriptions in Latin during the first century AD. Photographs and line drawings from photographs by Marta Díaz-Guardamino.

both places is different, there seems to be a clear pattern of 'disdain' for the previous local symbols, as it is also documented in the above-mentioned case of Pocito Chico.

During the Middle Ages, an interesting case of reuse of a Late Bronze Age stela is found at the Mudejar tower of the town of El Carpio (Córdoba). Here, Garci Méndez de Sotomayor, a Galician nobleman and founder of the town, ordered the construction of this tower in the fourteenth century AD with materials from the previous settlement, Alcocer, which had remained abandoned (Martínez Sánchez 2008). The stela probably came from Alcocer, where remains of Late Bronze Age occupation have been documented, and was reused as a lintel between the larder and the main room of the tower, with the engravings on the visible side. The presence of this Galician nobleman, the construction of the tower and the reuse of this stela are associated with the so-called Reconquest of the area, processes in which the reuse of materials from the old settlement would have acquired significance in the creation of an ancestry that never really existed.

A number of rock-art shelters and panels were used in Roman times and were Christianized in Late Antiquity or the Middle Ages, illustrating the persistence that some of them still had throughout the entire first millennium AD. A paradigmatic case is that of Peña Tú (Puertas de Vidiago, Asturias), a large rocky outcrop traditionally known as *Cabeza del Gentil* (Head of the Heathen). On the side of this huge rock outcrop is a panel with painted and engraved rock art dated to the Neolithic/Chalcolithic and beginning of the Bronze Age. A stela-like motif stands out accompanied by the representation of a large dagger next to which, during the Middle or Modern Age, various Christian crucifixes were added (Figure 10.5) (Blas Cortina 2003, 396). These are placed next to the idol, superimposed on a group of painted schematic motifs. This trend is repeated in countless cases on the Iberian peninsula, as well as in other European regions and it is clearly indicative of the significance of these places during the Middle Ages. They were Christianized by, among others, the engraving of Christian crosses, precisely because they were the focus of pagan worship (Blas Cortina this volume; Salisbury this volume).

Another interesting case of the Christianization of a rock-art complex is found in Peñas de Cabrera (Casabermeja, Málaga) located 30 kilometres to the south-east of Antequera. It has been suggested

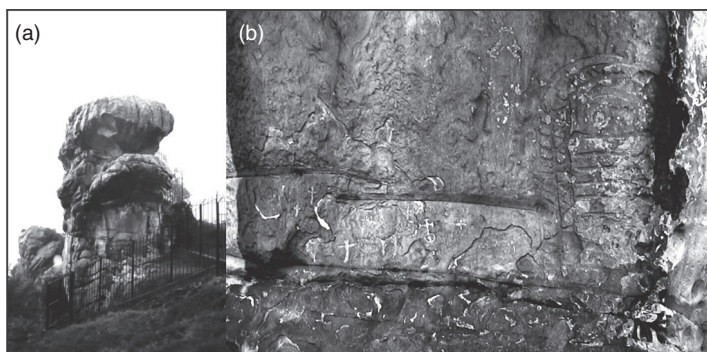


Figure 10.5. (a) Rocky outcrop of Peñatú (Asturias, Spain), (b) Crosses engraved on the main panel. Photographs by Marta Díaz-Guardamino.

that some of the cross-like signs engraved next to the prehistoric schematic motifs should be interpreted as a product of the local Mozarabic traditions (which could also be connected to the possible Christian crosses of Menga). These are five Christian crosses arranged more or less consecutively in ascending order, from the base to the top of the hill (Maura Mijares 2010, 119). A further example of Christianization of a rock-art site is that of the Romanesque chapel of San Bartolomé de Ucero (Soria), built in the thirteenth century AD near the entrance to a cave in which there are schematic rock-art engravings (García Soto Mateos and Moure Romanillo 1984). Given the space limitations, we shall not describe this and other caves and shelters with prehistoric art showing signs of Christianization in Spain, as they have been mentioned in previous publications (e.g. García Sanjuán et al. 2008, tbl.3; García Quintela and Seoane-Veiga 2011).

CONCLUSIONS

Until very recently, Iberian archaeological research has underestimated the powerful persistence of use and meaning that some monuments and sacred spaces created or founded throughout Late Prehistory (and particularly in the Neolithic) had during the Iron Age, Antiquity, and the Middle Ages. The case of the dolmen of Santa Cruz in Cangas de Onís (Asturias), described by Blas Cortina in this

volume (Chapter 11), is perhaps the most significant of all, given the extraordinary convergence of religious, political and landscape elements. Both quantitatively and qualitatively, the evidence presented in this chapter provides the basis to call for a better understanding of what might be a robust social and cultural phenomenon, which is still poorly understood.

The 'south-western'-script epigraph engraved between the seventh and fifth centuries BC on one of the slabs of the La Barca *tholos* (Valdecaballeros, Badajoz) may have had a funerary character (Rubio Andrada and Pastor González 2003), which relates its engraver directly to the use that the megalithic monument had in the Copper Age, possibly more than fifteen centuries before. This is also the case with the 'south-western'-script epigraphs engraved on the Late Bronze Age stelae of Majada Honda and Capote, as well as the Latin-script epigraphs inscribed on the Late Bronze Age stelae of Ibahernando and Chillón or the Bronze Age statue-menhir of Muiño de San Pedro. Given that Late Bronze Age stelae most probably had a commemorative function, perhaps in association with mortuary practices (Díaz-Guardamino 2014), it is remarkable that the inscriptions made to reuse them in the Iron Age and in Roman times had precisely a funerary character.

No less significant are the cases of enduring reuse or use of megalithic monuments in the Middle Ages. The burials in the atrium of Menga during the second half of the first millennium AD suggest that this megalithic monument may have been used as a hermitage, that is, a place of residence and burial for saintly men, like a sanctuary or *qubba*, a chapel or a marabout. A recent summary of funerary practices in Medieval Al Andalus indicates that in rural areas and on the outskirts of towns (which is exactly where Menga was located in relation to Medieval Antequera) there were *qubbas*, sanctuaries that housed the body of a worshipped holy man or ascetic, around which people would gather attracted by the holiness of the place (Chávet Lozoya et al. 2006, 150). Natural caves were also used as sanctuaries and hermitages by ascetics and mystics between the tenth and eleventh centuries AD, well evidenced in the neighbouring province of Córdoba (Carmona Ávila 2012). If Menga was already a place with a sacred and funerary significance in Antiquity, it is clearly possible that part of this meaning persisted throughout the Middle Ages. As indicated previously, Early Medieval necropolises associated with prehistoric or ancient sacred sites are not unusual, the presence of

which had provided prestige and meaning to some of the places in the area (Martín Viso 2012, 174). Also, we must not forget the Christianization of rock-art sites as proof of the existence of non-Christian—‘pagan’—practices and meanings associated with these places during this period.

The information presented in this chapter suggests that, as with other regions in Europe, Iberia also has prehistoric monuments with outstanding biographies. Although some of these cases are exceptional and there is no reliable quantitative information at the moment concerning the level of persistent use or reuse experienced by prehistoric monuments in the first millennia BC and AD, it seems clear that they refer to a series of social, ideological and religious phenomena that will require more attention in the future. Among them, we must mention the capacity of the Neolithic period to generate *foundational* places and landscapes that would continue to hold significance for millennia; the political and ideological role of ancestral monuments and sites; the strong awareness of the past itself, its use in the negotiation of identities and as a resource in the arena of cultural, social and ideological conflicts; the fragility of some categories, such as ‘prehistory’ and ‘history’, ‘continuity’ and ‘change’ when they are examined in the light of the persistence of some sites or monuments that were highly significant, both socially and ideologically.

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Megaliths and Holy Places in the Genesis of the Kingdom of Asturias (North of Spain, AD 718–910)

Miguel Ángel de Blas Cortina

INTRODUCTION

Flowing from the Picos de Europa mountain range into the Bay of Biscay (in a SW–NE direction), the River Sella is the main dividing axis of the highly mountainous territory of Asturias, northern Spain, with peaks up to 2,500 metres. The first known human traces in the Sella river basin date back to the Middle Palaeolithic and include remains of thirteen Neanderthal individuals found in the cave of El Sidrón. Archaeological remains dating to the Upper Palaeolithic and the Epipalaeolithic are frequent throughout the region. The adoption of the Neolithic way of life in Asturias was modest. The polished axes found in large numbers and mostly manufactured with rocks imported from other regions, are one of the main sources of evidence to study the Asturian Neolithic. The most noticeable archaeological evidence for this period is, however, the megalithic phenomenon, the earliest monuments dating to the beginning of the fourth millennium BC. Unlike the usual concentrations of barrows and dolmens in other areas of northern Iberia, these constructions are often found on high ground, strategically overlooking the main stretches of well-travelled pathways.

THE SANTA CRUZ DOLMEN

The most prominent Asturian megalith, Santa Cruz (Cangas de Onís), however, differs from the pattern outlined above, as it was placed on a fluvial terrace, on a location often flooded by the Sella and Güeña rivers, which meet here (Blas Cortina 1997a; 1997b) (Figure 11.1). The low altitude and the fair conditions of the optimal Holocene would have provided the basis for a densely forested environment throughout the fifth and fourth millennia BC. Historically, the most populated town of this region has been Cangas de Onís, located in the confluence of the Sella and Güeña rivers, where the best agricultural land is also found. These apt conditions also extend to the adjoining valley of Güeña, home to the sites of Covadonga and Abamia, which bear witness to the interweaving of prehistoric memory and Medieval affairs that will be discussed in this chapter.

It is reasonable to assume that the location of the Santa Cruz dolmen, like that of the town of Cangas de Onís itself, was determined by the confluence of the Sella and Güeña, which marks a point of strategic importance as it operates as the intersection between the sea and Cantabrian Mountains and the pre-littoral strip that controls the east–west circulation. In terms of the Neolithic territorial structure, the dolmen of Santa Cruz was therefore built at a strategically located node of the dispersed settlements between the mountains and the sea-oriented valleys. The large Medieval bridge next to Santa Cruz, built to accommodate a considerable traffic to and from Lucus Asturum, the capital of the Astures Trasmontanos, testifies to the importance of this crossroads in Roman times. At the same time, during the Roman period, the Sella was the border running between the *Conventus Asturum* and the *Conventus Cluniense*, and also between the Asturians and the Cantabrians.

With its large barrow, later crowned by the small church that gives it its name, Santa Cruz (Holy Cross in Spanish) is an outstanding megalith that shares the characteristic small passage typical of the megaliths found in the mountain areas of this region (Vega del Sella 1919). Its orthostats are profusely ornamented with geometrical patterns painted in red, carved, and engraved (Figure 11.2), reminiscent of the megalithic phenomenon in the Iberian north-west, where organic elements of the black pigments used for megalithic paintings have been radiocarbon-dated to the beginning of the fourth millennium BC (Carrera Ramírez and Fábregas Valcárcé 2006). Furthermore,

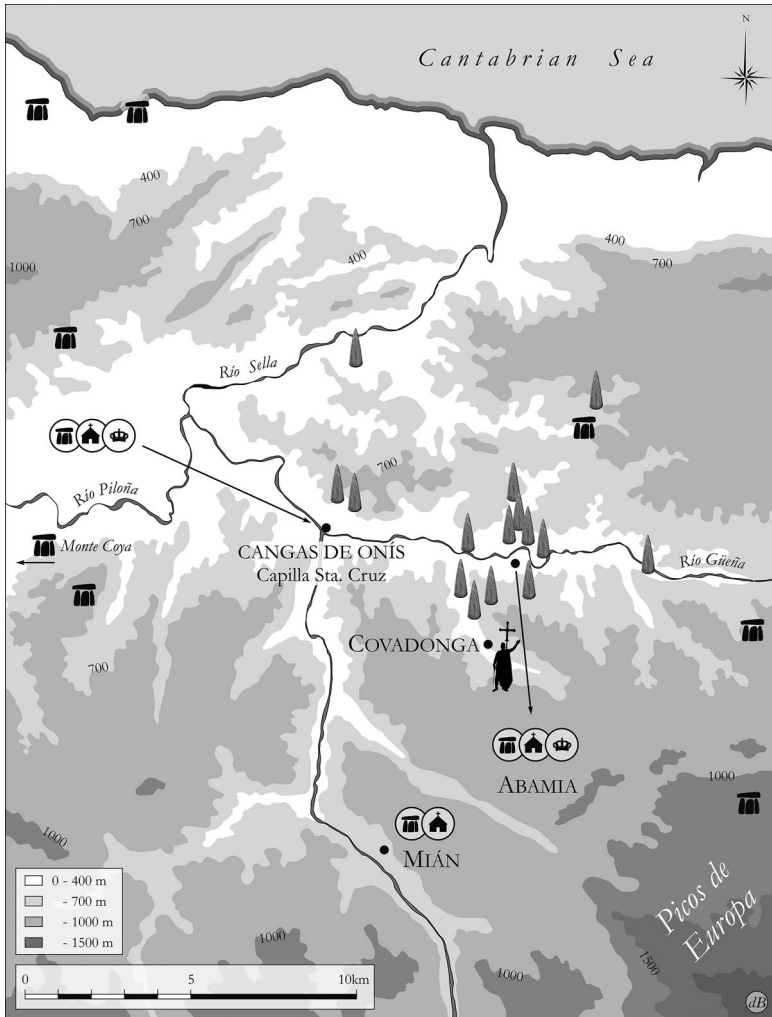


Figure 11.1. Map of the Sella basin (Asturias, Spain), with the location of the places mentioned in the text: Covadonga (with the effigy of the leader Pelayo), Cangas (dolmen, church consecrated in AD 737, and royal place), Abamia (dolmen, church, and royal place), Mian (old church and dolmen). The royal crown corresponds to the places that are related by Medieval chronicles to the earliest kings of Asturias. Map by Miguel Ángel de Blas Cortina.

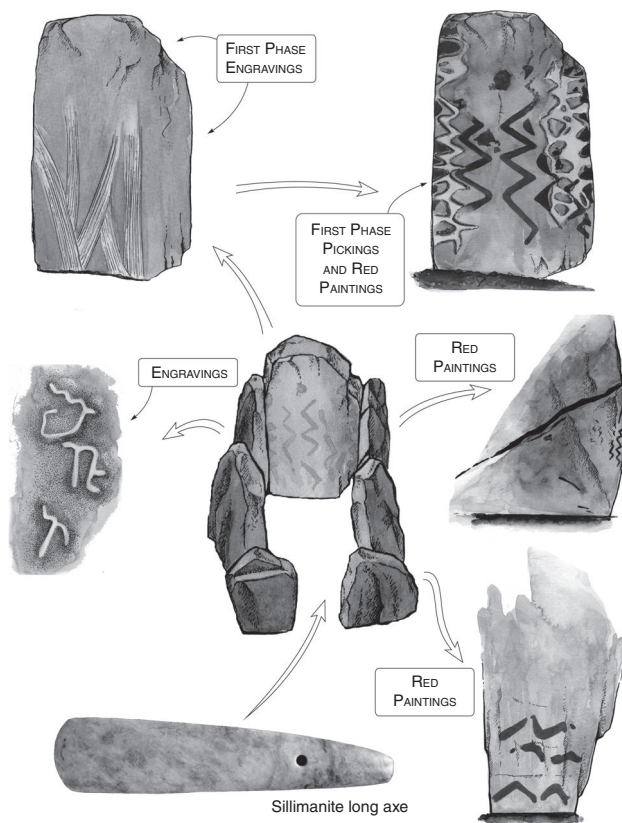


Figure 11.2. Dolmen in the chapel of Santa Cruz (Cangas de Onís, Asturias, Spain). Drawings by Miguel Ángel de Blas Cortina.

there are some engravings in Santa Cruz similar to the ‘rolling lines’ of megalithic monuments in Brittany (France). This is a coherent feature, taking into consideration the circulation of ideas and goods that seems to have taken place in the Neolithic along the west European Atlantic area, as exemplified by the variscite from Andalucía and Zamora, in southern and western Spain respectively, found in Armorica (north-western France). The funerary assemblage in Santa Cruz is remarkable precisely because of its extraordinary sillimanite axe, which could be related to the magnificent jadeite ones found in the splendid megaliths of Brittany (Pétrequin et al. 2007).

It is likely that Santa Cruz was an elitist mausoleum also used as the spiritual and social centre of a large territory. From this point of view it may be seen as a social device aimed at fostering local cooperation towards the domestication of this land in the Neolithic period. In other words, Santa Cruz may be seen as a gathering place in a region where, because of the complex topography, early human occupation was bound to be dispersed. Either way, the significance of the megalith would survive for millennia, being also remembered in Medieval times.

The discovery of some Roman funerary stelae near the Santa Cruz dolmen does not seem accidental. There are numerous Roman tombstones in the reduced germinal territory of the Asturian monarchy (Figure 11.3). In addition, the large number of Roman stelae along the Sella valley represents the 'reappearance' of funerary practices after a long period, spanning the Bronze Age and Iron Age, for which almost no evidence for funerary practices is found. All those late tombs were

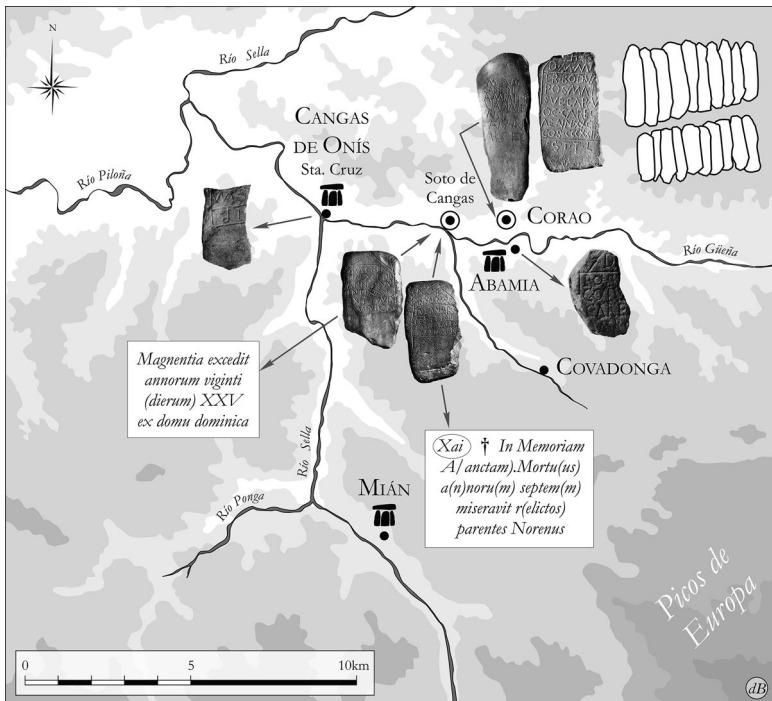


Figure 11.3. Concentration of Vadiniense tombstones in the area of Cangas de Onís. Map by Miguel Ángel de Blas Cortina.

probably for burial purposes, main modality in the Roman world since the fourth century BC (Prieur 1986). Interestingly, the main concentration of funerary inscriptions in the region is located in Corao, near Covadonga and even closer to Abamia.

The epigraphs found in connection with these tombs allude to the *gens vadiniense* settled along the Sella river valley (Diego Santos 1985). In addition, these gravestones evidence the indigenous acculturation under the Roman Empire and the first instances of individuals being commemorated with names and ages. Maybe something to take into consideration is the existence of some Vadiniense people who, around the third century AD, were recognized by Rome as *princeps cantabrorum*, hence becoming beneficiaries of certain civil and administrative freedoms (Mangas and Martino 1997). It could be argued that those Cantabrian *princeps* of Roman times would later become the local nobles at the beginning of the Early Middle Ages.

Another of the few megaliths in the area, the one in Abamia, was erected on a slope of the Gueña valley. There is not much information relating to its discovery, just some human crania and polished axes were found. The remains of the dolmen are still buried underground only a few metres from the church of Santa Eulalia. In the widest part of the chamber the roofing capstone displays several uneven lines and some cup marks, one of which includes two carved lines that cause the motif to resemble the head of a small owl. This was soon considered megalithic, an imagined 'idol of the eyes' thought as a precedent of the stone stelae of western Iberia (Almagro Basch 1966). The stela is certainly megalithic and its decoration is understood as part of the Iberian and Atlantic megalithic art. Nevertheless, the parts added for drawing the bird head are from an uncertain age and not from the Neolithic period (Blas Cortina 1994). Finally, the dolmen of Mián, in which human crania and polished axes were also found, appears to the east of the parish church of Santa María, located in a dominant position on a mountainside over the Sella, just before the river plunges into a series of steep slopes, in an obvious natural boundary.

The burials of the Vadiniense people deserve special archaeological consideration as they show the return to mortuary practices aimed at achieving a certain degree of cadaver preservation, as intended in the dolmens of Santa Cruz, Abamia and Mián during the Neolithic period. We could certainly think that the access to the megalithic structure of Santa Cruz could signify, for the Vadiniense people as well as their Early Medieval descendants, a re-encounter with

ancestors coming from an uncertain mythical past that, despite being largely unknown, carried a very real ancestral power.

PREHISTORIC MONUMENTS AND 'SIGNIFICANT PLACES' IN THE RISE OF THE ASTURIAN MONARCHY

The Arab invasion in AD 711 meant the breaking down of the Visigothic Kingdom of Toledo. Just some years later, around 718, 722 or 733, King Pelayo defeated the Muslims in Covadonga, near Cangas de Onís (Figure 11.4). Maybe this battle was just another skirmish, but the special historiographic attention it received later on, enshrined the Battle of Covadonga as the founding act of the Christian Kingdom of Asturias and, by extension, Spain, and imbued the site with a strong political significance.

Pelayo, the winner in that battle, was a leader between AD 718 and 737 and he is considered a king in the Chronicle of Abelda (*Chronicon Albeldense*) (c. 881) ('The first in Asturias Pelayo reigned at Cangas [de Onís] for nineteen years').¹ The account by a Muslim historian also considers Pelayo a new king governing a new nation (Ruiz de la Peña 1995). In the Chronicle of Alfonso III (*Crónica de Alfonso III*) (tenth century AD) (Gil Fernández et al. 1985), Pelayo is given the status of prince elected in an assembly, still, only a Goth *princeps* hidden in Asturias (Isla Frez 2002). The Visigothic perspective of Pelagius (Pelayo) enabling the Christian Reconquest would be firmly established by the twelfth and thirteenth centuries AD, when Pelayo is already seen as the main actor of the foundation of the *Asturatorum Regnum* in the Asturian mountains, bearing the image of a lord of the Toledo court. The connection between Pelayo and the extinct glory of Toledo will be repeated in order to promote the prestige and legitimacy of the Asturian Kingdom. This would stimulate the new 'visigothism' in the court established in Oviedo at the end of the eighth century AD.

¹ 'Primus in Asturias Pelagius regnavit in Canicas annis XIX' (see Gil Fernández et al. 1985).



Figure 11.4. Victorious Pelayo in Covadonga (*Don Pelayo Rey de Asturias*). Painting by Luis de Madrazo y Kuntz, 1856. Oil on canvas, 227 x 140 cm. © Museum of Covadonga, deposit from the National Museum of the Prado.

Nevertheless, in the Codex of Roda, the eleventh-century version of the Chronicle of Alfonso III (AD 852–910), it is stated that Pelagius was chosen king per *omnes Astores* instead of *gens gothorum* (Isla Frez 2002). The image of the Christian leader was then one of a distinguished member of a regional socio-political structure with a leadership similar to the local nobles during the social division of Europe at the beginning of the Middle Ages (Calleja Puerta and Suárez Beltrán 2002).

Pelayo was succeeded by his son Favila (AD 737–9). The most significant event in his brief reign was the construction in 737 of a small temple dedicated to the holy cross over the homonymous Santa Cruz megalith described above (Figure 11.5). In the foundational epigraph of the temple of Santa Cruz consecrated by Favila, it is stated that ‘by divine order this sacred building rises (*resurgit*) once again’, hence implying the existence of a (recognized) earlier sacred building. Undoubtedly, the special thing about this temple is its erection over a

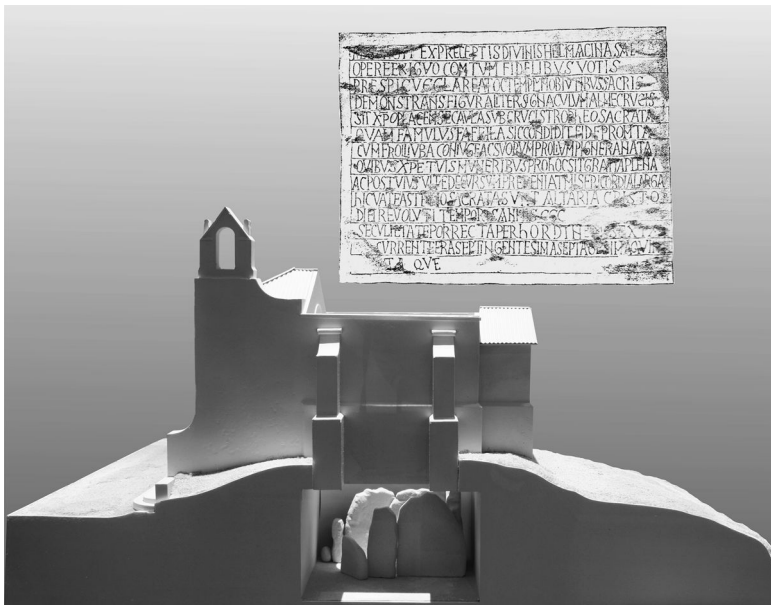


Figure 11.5. Section of mound, with the dolmenic chamber and chapel of Santa Cruz, consecrated as a Christian church in AD 737 under Favila *princeps*, as its foundational epigraph reads. Composite image by Miguel Ángel de Blas Cortina.

Neolithic structure of prominent volume. A description of the chapel made at the beginning of the seventeenth century, claimed that it had an interior 'cave' where Favila's tomb was placed. Also, it stated that people from all over the country used to dig out the soil around it, which was seen as 'a holy body' with healing powers. Furthermore, the same source affirms that the oak cross carried by Pelayo in the epic Battle of Covadonga was kept in this temple. At this point, by a formidable convergence of historic circumstances, the fourth millennium BC Neolithic dolmen of Santa Cruz had become symbolically connected to what later nationalist historiography would see as the stepping stone of the Reconquest and founding act of the Kingdom of Spain itself.

In AD 908, Alfonso III 'The Great' granted the cathedral of Oviedo an extraordinary cross made of gold and gemstones, modelled after Pelayo's oak cross. That cross, known as the Cross of the Victory, became the symbol of the Kingdom of Asturias (also of today's Principality of Asturias, an autonomous region within Spain). Apart from its religious nature, this Christian emblem possessed a historic character. One of the arms of the cross exemplifies this religious and earthly duality through the inscription: HOC SIGNO TUETUR PIUS HOC SIGNO VINCITUS INIMICUS ('With this sign the just is protected'/'with this sign the enemy is defeated'). However, this motto was not originally from the Asturian monarchy. The idea of the cross being a guarantee of success takes us back to the primeval event in the history of Christianity: Constantine's celestial vision, before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge (AD 312), of a cross inscribed 'Conquer by this',² as narrated by Eusebius Caesariensis in his *Vita Constantini* (Schaff 1890, 944). Either way, religion and political symbols merged in the Santa Cruz chapel, visibly raised over a Neolithic dolmen.

The story of the Abamia dolmen is no less remarkable. In the Chronicle of Alfonso III (AD 852–910), the church of Abamia is recorded as the first royal mausoleum: 'decessit et sepultus (Pelagius) cum uxore sua Gaudiosa regina in territorio Cangas in ecclesia Eulalie de Velando [Abamia] fuit' (Gil Fernández et al. 1985) (Figure 11.6). The temple was set up in dedication to St Eulalia of Mérida (Badajoz, Spain), a Christian martyr who died in AD 304. In geographical terms, the church is not located in the most optimal place, given that in its

² 'Hoc signo victor eris'.

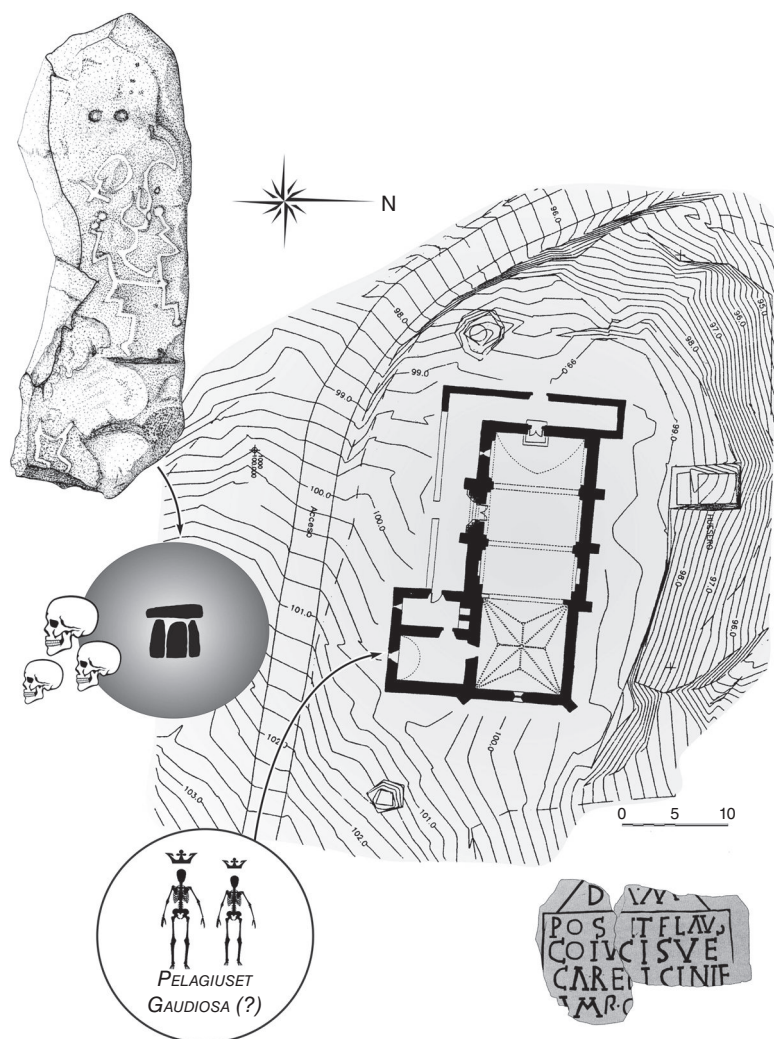


Figure 11.6. Abamia (Cangas de Onís, Asturias, Spain): dolmen with decorated stone, church of Santa Eulalia, tomb of King Pelayo and Gaudiosa (eighth century AD), and Roman tombstone from the same place. Plan and drawings by Miguel Ángel de Blas Cortina.

surroundings throughout the valley of Güeña there are more favourable and prominent areas. Everything indicates that the choice of this location was due to the will of raising the church near the megalith. In this way, the integration of the temple would be substantiated with the monumental Neolithic remains still having at that time the ancestral authority rooted in the worship of unknown forebears.³

Together with other important Christian relics, St Eulalia of Mérida's remains would have been brought to Asturias at the beginning of the Early Middle Ages, although their presence was not recorded until the tenth century AD. During this century and the previous one there were six temples in Asturias dedicated to the saint, and some of her relics were apparently kept there (this was possible because the bodies of saints could be dismembered and each piece still retain its holiness and desired healing efficacy⁴). Since the second half of the tenth century AD, the remains of the martyr were guarded in Oviedo in a silver chest of Arabic execution (Ruiz de la Peña 2006), donated by Alfonso VI of Castile around 1075. It is a well-known fact that in the Middle Ages the possession of one of these illustrious relics exceeded the religious dimension, its value extending towards the political and economic spheres. The importance of the sanctuary and its contribution to legitimize the royal regulation of the leader Pelayo is shown by two key points. First, the conflation of the royal tombs in Abamia with the veneration of the Roman-Hispanic martyr previously fervently worshipped in the Visigothic Kingdom of Toledo. Secondly, the persistent link between Eulalia's holy remains and the Asturian kings.

The available references about the temple of Mián are more succinct. It was built with its cemetery in a high secluded setting, similar to Abamia. Its existence as '*ecclesiam Sancte Marie*' is recorded in a document as early as AD 926. This document does not state the foundational date and so far only some elements of Roman origin have been recorded. The isolation of the temple was always

³ Although there are not any concluding arguments, the discovery of a Roman stela and other materials suggests that the site of Abamia, like Santa Cruz, also possessed a funerary significance in Roman times, before the establishment of Christianity (Ríos González 2009).

⁴ Before the thirteenth century AD the saintliness represented the discourse of the 'insensitive flesh', the only element of contact between God's direct servants and the believers who worshipped them (Vauchez 1990, 327–52).

shared with that of the megalith in whose surroundings it was located. Once again, the same process of syncretism is found along the Sella valley, in a place of remote consecration.

DISCUSSING CONTINUITIES BETWEEN THE NEOLITHIC AND THE MIDDLE AGES

In Atlantic Europe, the contiguity of megaliths and churches, or even sometimes their fusion into one monumental entity occurs relatively frequently, and this can be noticed in some clear examples throughout the Iberian peninsula (Leisner and Leisner 1956, pl. 47). These buildings reveal the reconversion and integration of 'pagan' beliefs and their corresponding material referents into a new religious programme.

In a different way, in other European areas during a short period of the Early Middle Ages, the reuse of prehistoric barrows combined a sense of validation of past behaviours and the power aspirations of the new leaders. Barrows similar to prehistoric ones were also built between the sixth and tenth centuries AD in England, Scandinavia, western Germany, etc. This monumental reactivation of the prehistoric barrow morphology was produced as an answer to funerary Christian chapels, reflecting the opposition of the non-Christian to the elite that was enshrined in the new religion (Van der Noort 1993).

The link between the church of Santa Cruz and its underlying dolmen conveys an irrefutable proof of the Medieval appropriation of ancestral authority attached to the megalith. This appropriation is not only spiritual; it was also desired by a still precarious lineage with royal aspirations. This lineage struggled for power in the context of the political atomization of the surviving Christian strongholds after the Islamic invasion. In that embryonic situation, the state and the Christian church were not completely settled institutions, but rather a group of lords who also included the clerical body. This resulted in an obvious mixture of political and religious power (Calleja Puerta 2000, 40). Therefore, it is understandable that, within the context of the political confusion of the eighth century AD, ideological legitimacy acquired a remarkable importance. Unlike the high and visible position of other churches in the area, the church of Santa Cruz was built in an awkward location, near the dolmen along the limit of the river floodplain.

Without any doubt, the megalith continued imposing, not only its volume, but also its moral influence, and, probably, its quality as an ancestral reliquary in which chronological accuracy was not an issue.

It is reasonable to believe that the Neolithic skeletons, skulls, and bones contained in the megalith were occasionally considered, perhaps even appreciated, as testimony to the ancestors' lives (Testard 2006), the enigmatic relics providing mythical explanations about the past. Following Richard Bradley's expressions (1987; 1993), the eighth century AD in the Sella river was that of 'time recovered' which would allow for 'the creation of continuity'.

In a more uncertain way, but not less eloquently, in Abamia the concepts of megalith, ancient necropolis (possibly Late Roman) and church-royal mausoleum are combined. This site also bore witness to the skeletons of the dolmen and the materialized image of the powerful ancestors with whom Pelayo and Gaudiosa would lie for all eternity. This important example, located near Santa Cruz, evidences, once again, the identification between the past and the power in the present, and the need of a monarchy in the making to connect itself with the primitive authority.

The cases of Santa Cruz, Abamia and Mián recorded in Asturias leave no doubt of the connection between the settlements of the emerging Medieval kingdom, and those hidden prestigious prehistoric places of 'power', whose influence was extended over the centuries. This convergence is further explained by the inclusion of 'pagan' sanctuaries into the Christian world-view. The most obvious of them is, without question, Covadonga.

The origin of the sanctuary of Covadonga is the Sacred Cave opened on a high cliff where there are two strong water upwellings, which constitute the birth of the Deva river. The name of this river is related to the pre-Latin hydrographic name of an aquatic goddess. Scholars agree in that the Covadonga toponym comes from the name Cova Dominica (The Cave of the Lady), found in the *Rotense Chronicle* (eleventh century AD). The scholarly tradition claims that the Virgin Mary was already an object of worship in this place before Pelayo and his famous battle (Carvallo 1695). The mythical quality of Covadonga stems from the contrast between the rocky wall and the water which emerges from it, a phenomenon that must have amazed the first local inhabitants. The belief that water from the cave had fertility powers was still widespread at the end of the nineteenth century AD, and many

infertile women used to go there in order to pray and faithfully drink the miraculous water.

It is believed that the *dominica* from the cave was a supernatural being prior to Christianity. Surprisingly, one of the first assumed signs of Christianization in the region was the Roman funerary tombstone of Magnentia, dead '*ex domu dominica*', an expression meaning 'the house of God': the church (Diego Santos 1977). Alternatively, the epigraph could refer to a specifically local, political or religious power originated within the political structure of the Vadiense people (Barbero and Vigil 1979). There is a further suggestive interpretation that categorizes the *dominica* as a numen of the actual cave of Covadonga, perhaps such belief having re-emerged in the Roman period due to the rooted devotion of the Romans to *fons*, *fontus* and *fontanus*, home to various aquatic deities (Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* 31.29 in Bostock and Riley 1855).

But the significance of Covadonga is not limited to the religious or spiritual sphere, but rather expands into the historic and political one. As a place that was transformed into the birthplace of the Asturian monarchy, Covadonga was therefore not randomly chosen: it was a pre-Christian cult site, with an aquatic numen reimagined as the Virgin Mary. It was the Virgin of Covadonga, who assisted Pelayo in his victory over the Saracens, and it was also at Covadonga where Pelayo, carrying his oak cross, would be later proclaimed king, standing on his shield and being lifted by his warriors (Carvallo 1695).

The Sella offers an illustrative process of conversion of symbolic capital into effective power, building up the group's identity from its mythical background, which would finally lead to political and territorial entities. The remains of those remote funerary rituals in Covadonga, Santa Cruz, and Abamia, are raised over the memory that legitimizes them. The tomb, a sacred place in almost every culture, is always a source of legitimacy once the temporal distance between two events is solved, through the appropriate ritual re-elaboration (Rader 2003). At the same time, the identification of the leaders of the Asturian Kingdom with prehistoric places and remains, inscribes and reinforces their local origin. The best example is the image of an indigenous Pelayo, who was also a faithful believer in the ancient myths attached to the territory. These beliefs, if merely assumed by Visigoth lords who were opposed to the Islamic power and had just fled into Asturias, would have been worthless.

A FINAL REMARK: THE CONTINUITY OF THE MEGALITHIC SITES AS PARISH ENTITIES

The churches of Santa Cruz, Abamia, and Mián enjoyed a long period of recognition as parish mausoleums: Santa Cruz until the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century AD, Abamia and Mián until the twentieth century AD. This is a rather significant fact, considering that, during the Middle Ages, the parish was the articulating framework of the rural community. The main components of the parish were the church, the cemetery and the territory, and the parish was also the area of participation in which duties and activities created bonds of solidarity (Gaudemet 1984).

The chronicler A. de Morales gives us an exceptional vignette of the integrating nature of the parish, being himself a witness on a Sunday in 1572 (Morales 1765). He tells us how more than 200 spears awaited driven into the ground around the church of Abamia while their owners attended mass, each spear identifying its owner as a free man. In many cases these men were part of the lowest ranks of the local nobility, known as *hidalgos*.

Many churches were built in places of pre-Christian worship; they kept their integrating capacity in a context of dispersed habitat, for the neighbours always gathered in the churches. These neighbour gatherings served not only as part of the liturgy, but also to discuss and decide in assembly on any issues related to the communal life and the superior power. Finally, churches were also considered centres of justice administration (Ruiz de la Peña 2008). In the parish the sacred is assembled, working the church as a link between the parishioner and the saint's relics, whether real or invented (Lauwers 2004).

At the same time, the cemetery confirms the importance of the parish in commemorating the dead, a place where all generations took root. If, indeed, the funerary realm exceeds its role as emotional anchor, the presence of a cemetery in all the three megalithic sites examined throughout this chapter, proves the reiteration of the funerary practice in three different periods: Neolithic, probably in the Roman Period (Santa Cruz and Abamia) and in the Middle Ages. Furthermore, these practices survived until contemporary times in Abamia and Mián.

Certainly, the difficulty in deciphering coherence in the process lies in tackling the issues of distance and temporal gaps, such as those

existing between the megaliths, the Roman funerary stelae and necropolises, and the Christian churches from the eighth century AD. However, it remains unquestionable that the past provides an intangible source of authority, regardless of practices changing through the years (Bradley 1993).

As for Covadonga, it is still an important site of worship to the Virgin Mary in Asturias. The rocky sanctuary is surrounded by an aura reinforced by many historical and legendary accounts. In addition, the sanctuary offers an intentionally patriotic interpretation, the Saint Cave or Cova dominica and the hazy events of the eighth century AD, which constitute the germinal setting for the Reconquest and the symbol of the Christian restoration in Spain.

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Life and Death of Copper Age Monoliths at Ossimo Anvòia (Val Camonica, Italian Central Alps), 3000 BC–AD 1950

Francesco G. Fedele

INTRODUCTION

During the third millennium BC a widespread Copper Age ideology manifested itself within and around the Alps in ceremonial sites prominently marked by standing monoliths or orthostats ('statue-menhirs'). The twin valleys of Valtellina and Val Camonica in Alpine Lombardy (Figure 12.1) provide some of the richest inventories of this ideology. The apparent avoidance of anthropomorphism in the Central Alpine monoliths makes them distinct from those of other areas in the Alps and beyond. Combined with an ignorance or neglect of archaeological context (Fedele 2012), this was a reason why the age of the monoliths long remained problematic. From this shared trait and other inter-valley similarities one can envisage a particular 'Camunian' province, this adjective being derived from the Augustan name for the Val Camonica polity, the *Camunni*.

In this province the first statue-menhirs were discovered between 1940 and 1953 and in the adjacent Adige Basin to the east similar monuments had already been known since the late 1800s, although only published from 1925 (Menghin 1925; Pedrotti 1996). However, not until the finding and excavation in 1988 of the site discussed in this article, Anvòia, did anyone think that statue-menhirs and associated sites could have a 'life' beyond their original time frame: this latter being the Iron Age, as it was initially thought, or the Copper

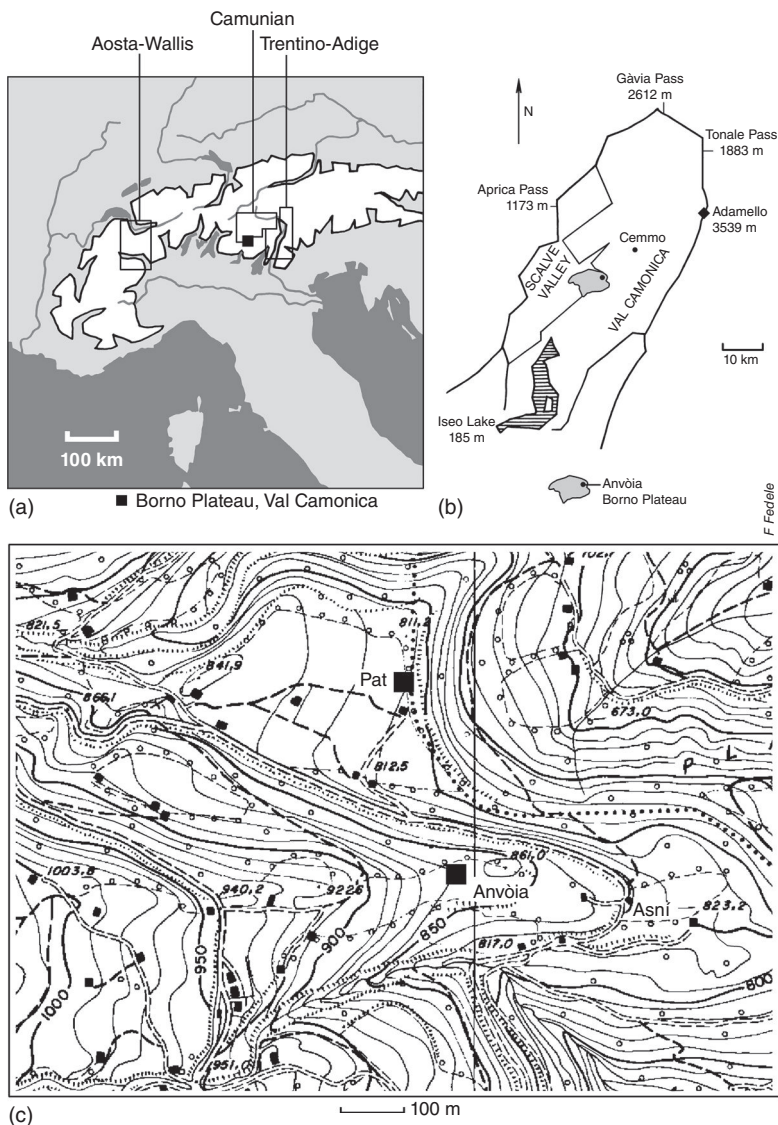


Figure 12.1. (a) Map showing the three main areas of Alpine statue-menhirs (Aosta-Wallis, Camunian and Trentino-Adige); (b) Val Camonica and the Borno Plateau; (c) North-eastern Borno Plateau and location of the Anvoia and Pat sites (commune of Ossimo). Maps by Francesco Fedele.

Age as we know now. The occurrence of whole or partial prehistoric monoliths in re-employed conditions—as roadside blocks; in vineyard walls—was considered banal and thus unimportant in archaeological or historical terms. Anvòia initially, and by the late 1990s two other monolith sites in the Val Camonica, Cemmo and Ossimo Pat, suggested instead that an appraisal of the vicissitudes of statue-menhirs after the Copper Age would be of great interest. The case-study presented here provides a demonstration of such possibilities.

To avoid the plethora of designations, the general term ‘monolith’ will be used to indicate any kind of individually placed stone of relatively large size, often upright. A monolith of the Alpine and circum-Alpine Copper Age, with human-evoking shape and/or imagery, will be called a ‘statue-menhir’. ‘Prehistory’ is another debatable term, insofar as the conventional boundary between the prehistoric and the historical is nowhere more blurred than in the mountains. The rediscovery of Anvòia in Late Antiquity offers a good example, showing how an event formally belonging to the historical period has to be interpreted without the assistance of documents and elicits considerations outside recorded ‘history’—as just another prehistoric occurrence. In its material and sedimentary expressions it also merges, imperceptibly, with both the previous and subsequent millennial history of the place.

CONTEXT AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Anvòia, a place-name at least six centuries old, identifies a small west-to-east ridge at an elevation of 855 metres in the easternmost district of the Borno Plateau, 600 metres above the valley bottom of the Val Camonica, in the commune of Ossimo (Figure 12.1:c). The landscape is rural and still largely made up of light mixed forest of the lower montane horizon. Known prehistoric activity is confined to the ridgetop and to the base of a steep hill to the west, which, lacking an established name, was called in the archaeological project ‘Hill C’ (Figure 12.2).

Statue-menhirs occur in three main areas of the Alps (Figure 12.1:a). In the central Alps, Anvòia was the first site in which these monuments were found and examined in their primary context, a result of a survey programme designed for that purpose, and research developed over



Figure 12.2. The Anvòia ridge from midslope on Hill C at the time of discovery (1988), with areas A and C indicated. Photograph by Francesco Fedele.

nine excavation seasons (1988–2004; Fedele 1990; 1994; 1995, 67–81; 2008) (Figure 12.3). A ceremonial site was brought to light with several statue-menhirs in their final position. Artefacts and ecofacts indicated ritual activity during the third millennium BC, with cultic expressions possibly already manifest in the fourth millennium BC. The Copper Age was the only prehistoric horizon attested through fieldwork. The single

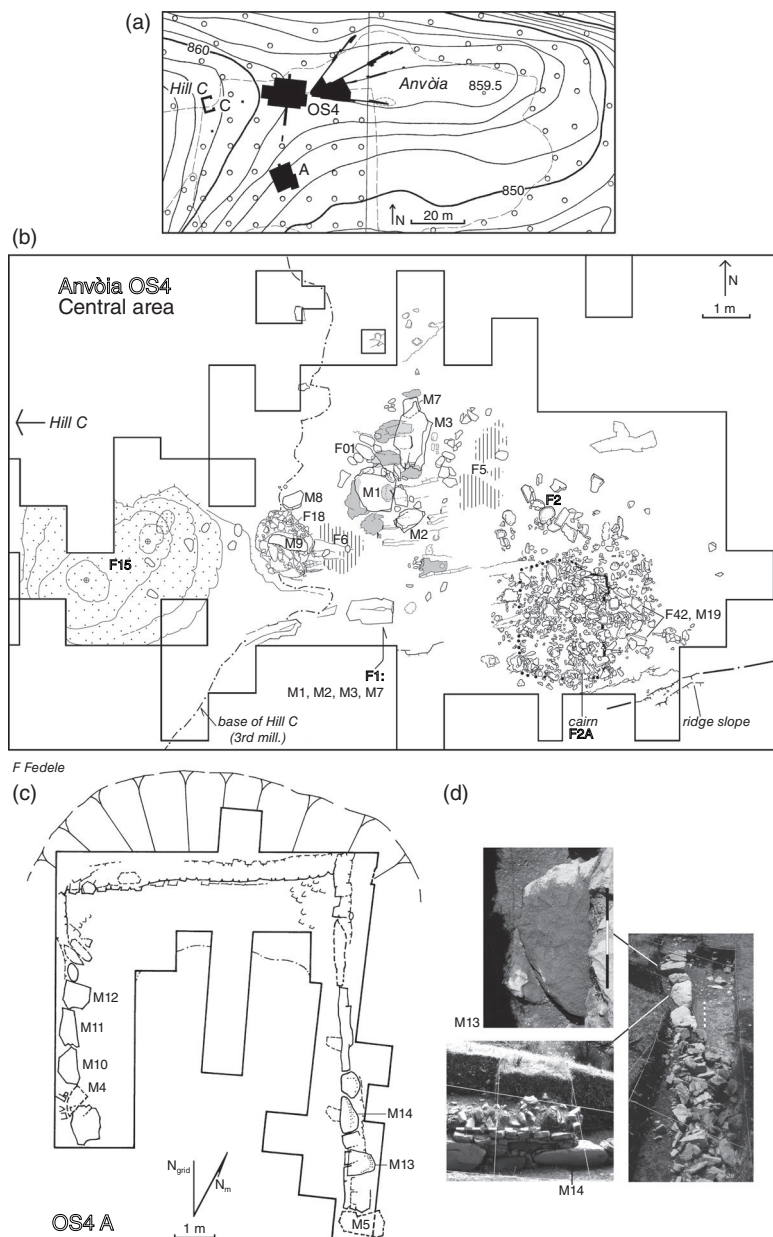


Figure 12.3. (a) Anvòia: general plan of the excavations, including the prehistoric site on the ridge (OS4) and areas A and C (pastoral structures); (b) Excavation plan of the prehistoric site's central area, emphasizing fourth century AD features: pit F18, pitted bedrock corresponding to monolith cluster F1 (pits in grey), and flake scatters F5 and F6. Monoliths as found; (c) Area A: excavation plan of structure A with main monolith fragments as found; (d) Eastern wall of structure A from north, and monoliths M13 and M14. Plans and photographs by Francesco Fedele.

further phase indicated by archaeology was, apparently, a massive fragmentation of monoliths during the past few centuries.

Starting in 2007, however, radiocarbon determinations have revealed an entirely new chapter in the site's history. After a millennia-long quiescence Anvòia attracted people's attention again in the fourth century AD, as discussed in section 'Anvòia II' below (Figure 12.4). This will be called the 'fourth-century event', meaning one episode or, more likely, a closely spaced series of episodes. The Anvòia sequence can be summarized as follows:

- Anvòia I—Copper Age, subphases I–III: end of fourth millennium to c. 2200 BC;
- Anvòia II—Late Antiquity: probably AD 320–395;
- Anvòia III—Modern period: c. AD 1500–1850; 1950.

Anvòia I

This brief account of the Copper Age phase is presented for the sole purpose of grounding the subsequent history of the site and its monuments in their original conditions and characteristics. Details on the ceremonial site can be found elsewhere (Fedele 2006; 2008; 2013; Fedele and Fossati 2012). The excavation evidence shows that around 3000 BC, or somewhat earlier, the Anvòia ridge was recognized as a locality of ideological importance. Local stones with special attributes (evocative shapes and colours, colouring properties) and a furrowed surfacing bedrock were incorporated into the make-up of the site. To think it as a place imbued with myth and *mana* is not perhaps far-fetched. Also the base of Hill C was ideologically meaningful: the slope break was noticed and conceptualized for ritual purposes. And once chosen, this 'special' place was progressively furnished with statue-menhirs, which in spite of their often elusive shape were true statues of people.

At its apex in the Copper Age III, Anvòia had at least twenty-five monoliths, including a cluster near the base of Hill C (F1). Four complete monoliths lying *in situ*, and the inferred placement of other large stones to the south, suggest an alignment, continuing for perhaps 10 metres down the southern flank of the ridge. An extraordinary hill-base feature is F18, a unique pit with a complicated history, into which a reworked menhir, M9, was finally inserted. It was this joint feature F18-M9 that led to the discovery of the

Sample	Plant taxon	^{14}C age BP	Calendar age AD (2σ)
8.14	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	1694 ± 77	139–538
9.22	unidentified	1694 ± 18	259–410
332.47	<i>Picea/Larix</i>	1923 ± 20	28–127
333.10	<i>Picea/Larix</i>	1787 ± 19	138–324
334.1	<i>Juniperus</i>	1724 ± 19	254–383
333.10	<i>Juniperus</i>	1661 ± 49	256–534

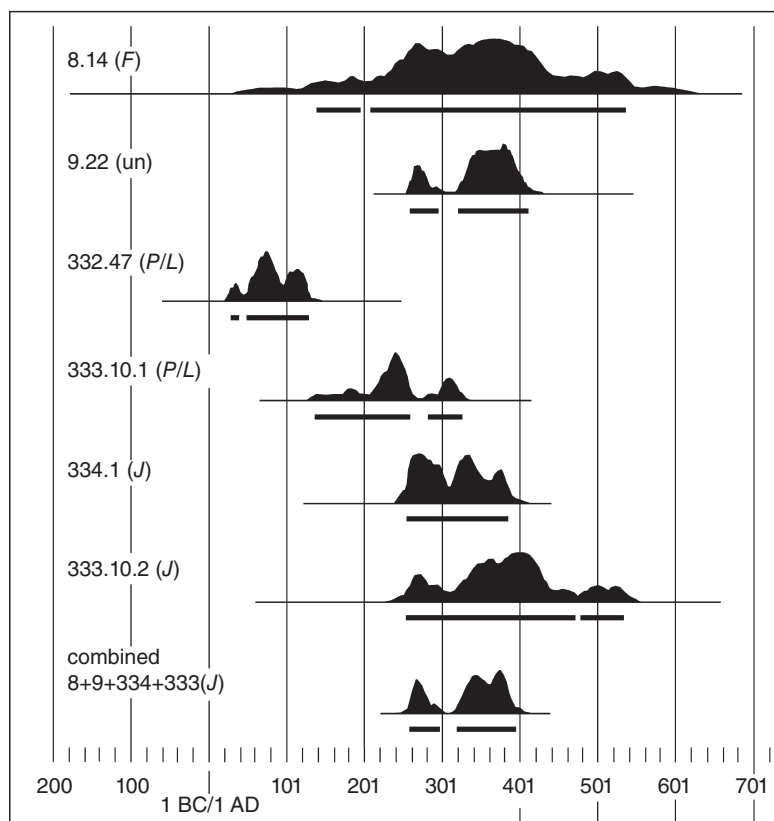


Figure 12.4. Anvòia: results of radiocarbon measurements for pit F18. All obtained from single-fragment charcoal samples, AMS determinations (CIRCE laboratory, Caserta, Italy). Multiplot graph of calendar ages from Fedele et al. 2012, fig. 6 (modified); table at the top of figure after Allevato et al. 2013.

fourth-century event. Whether or not the original M9 was part of the F1 alignment, its presence corroborates the association of a major cluster of monoliths with the foot of Hill C.

Statue-menhirs could have adventurous lives, as revealed in the 1960s by the spectacular site of Petit-Chasseur at Sion, in Canton Wallis (Switzerland) (Bocksberger 1976, 3–5; Corboud 2009, 1–2), and Anvòia provides some remarkable ‘biographies’ (Fedele 2006). For example, one of the largest monoliths was taken from the ground in Copper Age III and then re-erected upside-down, having been carved anew with the peculiar imagery of that phase, the Cemmo-3 motif. In northern Italy this phase partly corresponds to the Bell Beaker phenomenon. Societal changes were clearly in motion, and a corollary was the practice of ‘reinterpreting’ and refashioning old stones, which produced the first flake scatters at the site. Shortly afterwards, the ceremonial functions came to an end and the site would remain forgotten in the woods. Determining when Anvòia was abandoned depends on the dating of the Cemmo-3 motif, which might transgress into the earliest Bronze Age. Throughout the Alps the making of statue-menhirs disappeared at the turn of the third millennium BC, and in Alpine Lombardy—it seems—more abruptly than elsewhere.

Anvòia II

At present, no archaeological evidence of human activity is recorded in the Anvòia area for the next 2,500 years, and the site remained in sedimentary equilibrium. A significant discontinuity can be inferred, during which the larger monoliths, only half-buried, presumably remained visible. One was M9, of interest here because it experienced two entirely distinct ‘lives’: the extant monolith is the core of an earlier statue-menhir, which was completely hammered out over its surface and transformed into a small, featureless pillar. Proto-M9 was an element of F1, or might have stood a little off-line to the west, inserted in a precursor of pit F18. After reduction to a pillar it was re-erected in an enlarged version of this pit, which was lined and packed with spalls from flaking the monolith (Figure 12.5:a). Abundant charred wood—another unique occurrence at Anvòia—was intercalated with the flakes and sediments filling the pit. Analytical excavation and post-excavation studies have allowed this episode to be described, and a new cultural phase to be established.

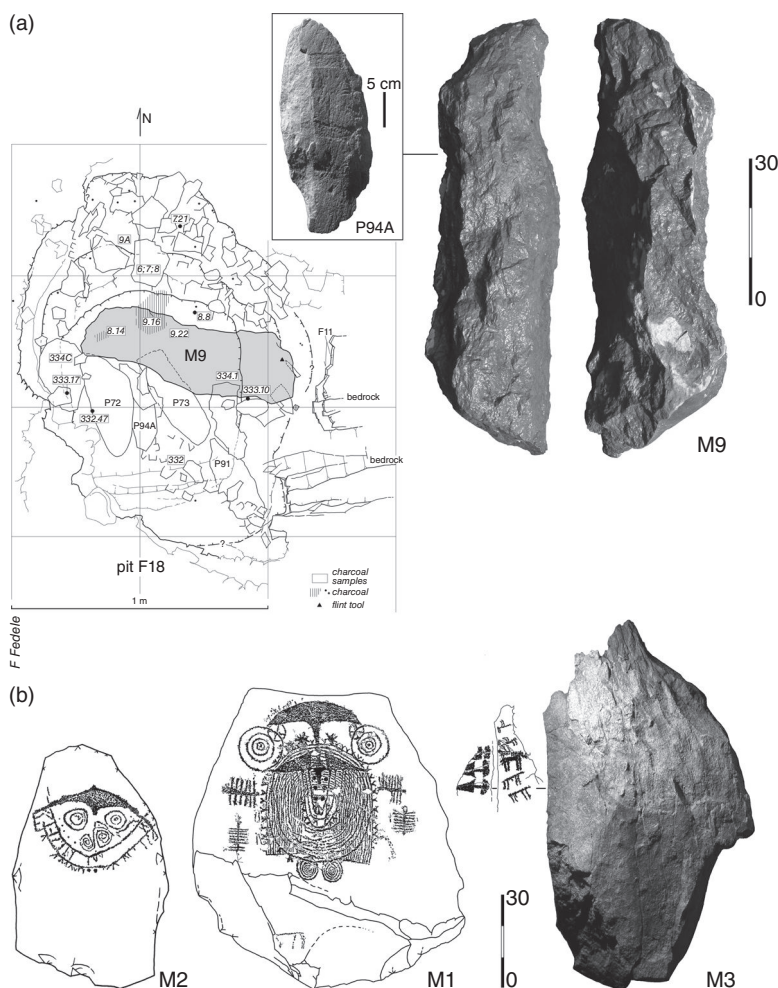


Figure 12.5. (a) Anvòia: detailed plan of pit F18, and photograph of monolith M9. Inset: animal figures on a spall from M9; (b) Monoliths M1, M2, and M3. Tracings by Angelo Fossati, *Le Orme dell'Uomo*, from F.G. Fedele and A. Fossati, 'Corpus dei monoliti di Ossimo Anvòia', in preparation. Drawings and photographs by Francesco Fedele.

Six single-fragment radiocarbon measurements of botanically identified charcoal have shown that, unexpectedly, the fire or fires recorded by pit F18 did not belong to the Copper Age but to Late Antiquity. Radiocarbon determinations were multiplied to dispel any doubt. Spruce or fir data were excluded from a combined date in order to avoid potential 'old-wood' effect. As a result, we are confident with 72 per cent probability that fire 'F18' should be placed in the 320–395 AD interval, with a strong radiometric indication that it cannot be later than the fourth century AD. Detailed justification can be found elsewhere, together with vegetational and behavioural reconstruction (Fedele et al. 2012; Allevato et al. 2013). The Anvòia case highlights the potential of C14 for correctly understanding cultural events beyond the knowledge directly produced by fieldwork, however meticulous.

How can the fourth-century event be visualized? On present evidence, Anvòia was rediscovered. It was shrouded in light forest, a sparse woodland with spruce, fir and beech, associated with areas likely devoted to grazing. A millennial interruption had erased the sacredness of the place, but, whether because of some lingering knowledge or a chance encounter, the surprising old stones revived that notion. Furthermore, the F18-M9 episode was not the sole reaction. The radiocarbon finding provoked a re-examination of the excavation records to recognize the full scope of the fourth-century engagement with the monuments, and a range of actions is unfolding (Figure 12.6).

Through stratigraphic correlation a fourth-century date can be transferred to other features. Generally associated with the topmost cultural level, these share the breakage, flaking, and/or displacement of stones—a behavioural connotation. The spectrum includes selective flaking, re-erection of fallen monoliths, apparent repositioning or 'repackaging' of fragments or cobbles, and, quite possibly, rolling monoliths down the hillside. This latter would explain nicely the reuse of large monoliths in area A during phase Anvòia III. As to raising statue-menhirs, the exceptionally scarred and pitted bedrock underlying the F1 group leaves no doubt that during both the Copper Age and Late Antiquity this was a privileged place for the erection and re-erection of monoliths. Finally, a few small finds might belong to Anvòia II, stratigraphically, including pottery debris, a glass bead and a small bronze plate¹.

¹ Detailed study of these finds is in progress at the time of writing, in March 2014; the following information was kindly provided by Serena Solano and Eliana Sedini.

1 simple re-erection of a monolith

2 re-erection of a monolith after adapting its base by reshaping or sharpening

3 re-erection of a monolith after flaking (apparent abolition of imagery)

→ resulting in 3A: production of conspicuous flake spreads

EXAMPLES

M2

M1

M9, M3

F6, F5

TO BE CONFIRMED

4 indifferent hammering or breaking → followed by abandonment or scattering

5 re-positioning of hammered blocks or spalls

6 introduction of new stones, including 'grey marl' cobbles

7 pulling or rolling monoliths down the hillside (on southern flank, i.e. towards area A)

chunk-and-cobble scatter F2?

spall 'packs' F42, including M19?

F01? F2?

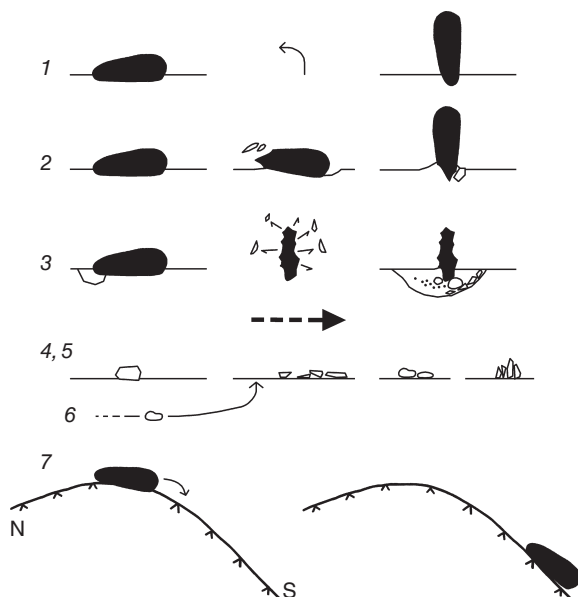


Figure 12.6. Modes of monolith or stone manipulation, Anvòia phase II, 'fourth-century AD event'. Modes 1–3 proved, 4–7 hypothetical. Drawings by Francesco Fedele.

Anvòia III

Apparently abandoned for a second time after the fourth century AD outburst, the site was steadily buried by colluvium due to

The 3-centimetre-long plate might be the trapezoid foot of a 'Trentino'-type brooch (sixth–seventh century AD), but a final verdict must await restoration. Similarly, the tiny bead would fit with fifth–sixth century AD productions. If so, these objects, both connected with garments, would suggest visits during a slightly extended time span than is currently allocated to phase Anvòia II. Pottery, represented by about a dozen centimetre-sized fragments of fine ware, can only be ascribed generally to late Roman or Medieval manufacture.

deforestation. Then, starting perhaps in the later Middle Ages but greatly increasing in the Modern period, farming activity was responsible for the last phase in the site's history: Anvòia became a ready-made quarry, and many stones were removed. The monoliths and their visible remnants were re-employed as building material for shelters and animal pens. Several buried ruins were identified, and two were examined archaeologically, 'A' and 'C', the latter partly above ground (Figure 12.3). Both are small, roofless, purely utilitarian enclosures for penning animals (*mandri*). The reworking greatly altered or obliterated the monolith material from the fourth century AD: as shown by refitting, pre-existing fragments were exploited and newly reduced. Some smashing and resizing was carried out at the prehistoric site, but most took place at the enclosures themselves, including a final episode—with gunpowder—at *mandri* C in 1950. In total, about 220 fragments and partial monoliths were retrieved.

When *mandri* A (Figure 12.3:c) was built is unknown, lacking diagnostic evidence, but masonry and sediments suggest it postdates the fourth century AD considerably. In an earlier phase, two or three statue-menhirs were used in such a way that, apparently, their layout acknowledged the ancient imagery: the engraved face was not destroyed (M13), or was even positioned in a way to be visible from the inside of the pen (M14). A monolith similarly positioned on the roadside at Ossimo Asnì has an engraved date of '1750' (Anati 1972). In a later phase of A (post AD 1800?), as well as in structure C, a more recent construction, the ancient monoliths were simply treated as stone material. Two different and probably successive attitudes can thus be perceived. These and other behavioural modes are evaluated on a broader canvas in the following section.

DISCUSSION: THE 'HISTORICAL' PERIOD

Interpreting the field and laboratory evidence from Anvòia's 'historical' period raises a number of issues. The following discussion will be mainly devoted to phase Anvòia II, equated—with radiocarbon probability—with the fourth century AD.

Fourth century AD

The fourth century AD was the period during which several Alpine areas began to be Christianized, and therefore the primary question is

whether the interventions at Anvòia were carried out in a Christian or a 'pagan' context. Three chief elements characterize fourth-century behaviour at the site: re-erection of monoliths, selectivity, and use of fire. These will be used in turn as clues to interpretation.

Four monoliths were demonstrably re-erected (M1, M2, M3, M9), and additional instances might have been obliterated during phase Anvòia III. That M3 and M9 were set upright after being selectively or totally flaked, whereas, for instance, M1 and M2 were left intact, suggests the intention of stripping them of their imagery. If a particular imagery was targeted, the disturbing images might have been those of animals, since both M3 and M9 displayed recognizable animal figures. M1 and M2 instead presented a symmetrical composition that might easily have been understood as a face or mask, albeit weird or grotesque (Figure 12.5). If so, some form of aesthetic or conceptual 'consonance' with the ancient effigy might explain the respect: a kind of 'pagan' reinterpretation of 'pagan' features from earlier times (cf. Bradley 2007).

A reactivation of statue-menhirs would hardly be expected in a Christianizing context, at least in the specific time and place being discussed. The reuse of 'idols'—in this case from the depths of the past—is believed to differ dramatically from Christianity (Maxwell 2012, 852). However, since there are places where menhirs and other upright stones were Christianized, usually by the addition of crosses (e.g. in Brittany, this volume) or through association with churches (e.g. in Lunigiana, between Liguria and Tuscany), the phenomenon probably requires regional re-examination.

When selective destruction occurred, was it iconoclasm, or indifferent smashing? The destruction of effigies in Late Antiquity reflected varying ideological and psychological reasons, from suppressing the malign power (*magica persuasio*) of earlier idols to blindly following official injunctions (e.g. Stewart 1999; Caseau 2011). Within Christian doctrine, iconoclasm as a principle was hardly consistent, despite imperial pressure (increasing from c. AD 385; e.g. Sánchez Velasco 2013). Iconoclasm in Anvòia's time frame and context need not imply Christian agency because 'pagan' elements manipulated by 'pagans' is a plausible possibility—older meaningless images being replaced by familiar ones.

Use of fire has a long and distinguished tradition in the eastern Alps and Val Camonica—the Rhaetian culture area. The ideological core was a Late Bronze and Iron Age ritual based on ceremonial offering through fire in striking open settings, the *Brandopferplätze*

(cultic sites defined by burnt offerings) (Gleirscher 2002; Solano 2010a). These ceremonies of the agricultural cycle had a purpose of propitiation and purification; they were still common in the fourth century AD and locally persisted later (Solano 2010b). There is growing evidence that the practice has important implications for understanding the religious variety of the fourth century, and possibly the specific event at Anvòia.

In AD 397 Martin, bishop of Tours, was martyred in France. The same year, much closer to the Val Camonica, three clerics who tried to disrupt ‘pagan’ ceremonies in *Anaunia* (the Non Valley, Trent) were killed. Their bishop, Vigilius, to whom we are indebted for knowledge of their martyrdom, was himself stoned to death by furious ‘pagans’ a few years later (Fletcher 1997, 44; Grégoire 1997; Codroico and Gobbi 2001; Pizzolato 2002). In the Trentino region, adjacent to the Val Camonica, there were not only oscillations in cult, but authentic cases of ‘rural’ backlash ‘paganism’, particularly at the end of the fourth century. Vigilius, an ardent fighter of idolatry, allegedly met his death while breaking up a statue of Saturn and throwing it into the river. If the martyrdom can be disputed (see critical comments on the destruction of *signum* in Cerno 2012, 96–7), the offence to a ‘statue’ that the hagiography records is interesting. Might Vigilius have smitten a statue-menhir?

Of equal interest is the mention of Saturn. His worship has long been recognized as an *interpretatio Romana* of a prehistoric cult whose popularity was greatest among the communities living in western Trentino, and there is a distinct possibility that ‘Saturn’ embodies a late expression of the cult associated with the *Brandopferplätze* (Mastrocinque 1994, 97–117; Paci 2001). The ‘pagans’ who put to death the Anaunian evangelizers were ‘sacrificing for purification’ and thus probably performing that ritual. It would not be surprising if the above provided the conceptual framework for the fires associated with F18-M9 at Anvòia, or those inferred for Valzèl de Fì, which are presented below: a *Brandopferplatz*-like act of consecration and appeasement as well as purification?

A few historical pegs will help frame the subsequent discussion. The following is a date-list of some political and archaeological events of interest, either general or regional.

- AD 313: Constantine’s ‘Edict of Toleration’—all non-Roman cults made legal, including Christianity;

- AD 341: Constantius' condemnation of 'pagan' worship and sacrifice;
- AD 380: Theodosius' *Cunctos populos*—the first of several decrees making Nicene Christianity the official state church;
- AD 397–c. 405: Christian 'martyrs' in countryside settings—the Alps, France;
- c. AD 400: generalized deactivation of 'pagan' sanctuaries—Val Camonica-Trentino.

Anvòia's fourth-century event would fall in the interval defined by the two dates of AD 313 and AD 380, the latter the turning point, when Nicene Christianity received imperial support. In 391 Theodosius closed the temples and banned 'pagan' cults all over the empire. The ensuing burst of missionary activity, however, failed to establish Christianity firmly, partly because different Christian factions—some called 'heretic'—were competing. A simple, unilineal history of the decline and fall of 'paganism' to Christianity has no historical basis. There was instead a long coexistence characterized by 'religious syncretism and fluid identities' (Maxwell 2012, 851), with the occasional confrontation, and the fourth century AD was the most crucial and complicated period (e.g. Fletcher 1997; Dowden 2000; Lavan and Mulryan 2011; Lenski 2012, 137–79).

Indeed, both rural and official 'paganism' and various shades of Christianity contributed to this variegated ideological spectrum (Salzman 2007; Gwynn and Bangert 2010), or rather, 'many people respected the power of a mix of religions' (Maxwell 2012, 864); old rituals and sacrifices continued locally beyond the fourth century (Stroumsa 2005; Chuvín 2009; Cameron 2010; Maxwell 2012, 854–64). Particularly in rural areas—the *pagi*, whence the name 'pagan'—the *genii* or spirits of place did not disappear. On the Borno Plateau, pronounced conservatism is suggested by the continuing use of Iron Age jewellery and amulets in Borno's Roman cemetery. Useful suggestions for the Alps can be derived from broadly similar contexts elsewhere (e.g. Jerri 2002; Sauer 2007; Yeates 2008; Guyon and Heijmans 2013).

The last entry in the date-list is directly relevant to Anvòia's broader context. In Alpine Lombardy and Trentino, archaeology shows that the major 'pagan' sanctuaries all ceased functioning towards the end of the fourth century or soon afterwards, and this

change was irreversible (Solano 2010b). For the Val Camonica one can mention Breno Spinera, Capo di Ponte, and—on the Plateau—Borno Calagn'. Some underwent destruction and robbing for construction of Christian buildings. Concurrently, both epigraphy and patristic documents suggest that Christianity took hold in the Central Alps and western Trentino not earlier than the advanced fifth century AD (Sannazaro 1990; Valvo 1991; Buchi 2000; Cavada 2003; Colecchia 2004; Salvarani 2010, 343).

In this context, the rediscovery of a statue-menhir site in Late Antiquity gains significance, in addition to being a novelty in the Alpine archaeological record. To add perspective, three cases from Copper Age sites in the Val Camonica—two recently excavated—will be considered (Figure 12.1).

At Ossimo Pat, located on a lower terrace near Anvòia, small hearths presumably containing offerings were lit beside a still erect statue-menhir during the Iron Age, when a village was established on the terrace (Poggiani Keller 2009). *Pace* Poggiani, there is no demonstrable basis for cult continuity from the Copper Age. Unpublished research by F.G. Fedele and S. Poni has identified a similar case at Valzèl de Fì, on the Borno-Ossimo border, from reworked Iron Age (fourth/third century BC) and 'Roman' burnt material at the findspot of eroding statue-menhirs (De Marinis 1994). A different sequence can be argued for the ceremonial site at Cemmo, where the paired geological boulders representing its cultic focus—the Massi—had always remained fully visible. What appears to have been a tradition of quiet respect for the ancient monument was intermittently revived during the Iron Age and the Roman period, when some monoliths were still standing (Poggiani Keller 2009). These, it seems, remained untouched, until they were discarded or smashed when the site was eventually deactivated around the Roman/Medieval transition 'in connection with the fight by Christians against the idolatry of stones, *saxorum veneratio*' (Poggiani Keller 2011, 460).

In conclusion, Anvòia's fourth-century event is likely to be explained with reference to contrasting systems of 'paganism'. A simplistic alternative between 'paganism' and Christianity should be discounted, if only because, as in most coeval cases, Christianizing behaviour was normally characterized by an ostentation of purpose (markings, destruction etc.) that is lacking at Anvòia. Furthermore, the site's monoliths were

probably manipulated according to local ‘pagan’ belief, not necessarily the Roman ideological-devotional system. The preferred interpretation is a ‘pagan’ ceremony—or a suite of related ceremonies—of reappraisal and re-consecration, enacted when this ‘pagan’ site beyond memory was encountered in the woods.

Modern period

As mentioned, two different and probably successive attitudes towards ‘ancient’ stones can be perceived from phase Anvòia III. Broadly contemporary is the incorporation of Copper Age monoliths in town and country houses at Borno and Ossimo. Both destruction of and curiosity for the ancient imagery are apparent. Broken statue-menhirs were embedded in house walls with their engraved face visible from the street, and a similar fragment appears in the centre front of a farmhouse in a nearby valley (Figure 12.7). The dates of embedding are unknown, but this behaviour resembles the initial phase of Anvòia’s structure A. Was it decoration pure and simple? In fact, while the evidence awaits study, one should be prepared to question the subject in greater detail; the emerging picture is outlined in Table 12.1.

Clearly the stones were unusual—they bore funny or puzzling images—but they elicited a conscious act of consideration, and therefore might have had deeper cognitive impact. Were they ‘ancestral’, disquieting, dangerous, or else deemed to be mascots? Finally, and only documented after about 1950, monoliths were sometimes hidden or obliterated to avoid inconvenience or legal troubles: their fragments were walled up, whole monoliths were taken to discard dumps at Borno. Connections, if any, are hard to define with the religious and aesthetic shift determined by the Counter-Reformation (c. 1560–1650).

In many conceptual modes, stone breaking has been an enduring motif of Anvòia’s ‘lives’ in the ‘historical’ period, possibly already beginning in Copper Age III. Stone breaking has technological and historical significance (Martzluff 2009). Particularly relevant for our case is the landmark study by Gillings et al. (2008, 291–355) on Avebury (Britain), in which, through a detailed analysis of the ways in which menhirs were fragmented or depredated in an early modern context, the many correlates involved—social, psychological, temporal—are elegantly elucidated.

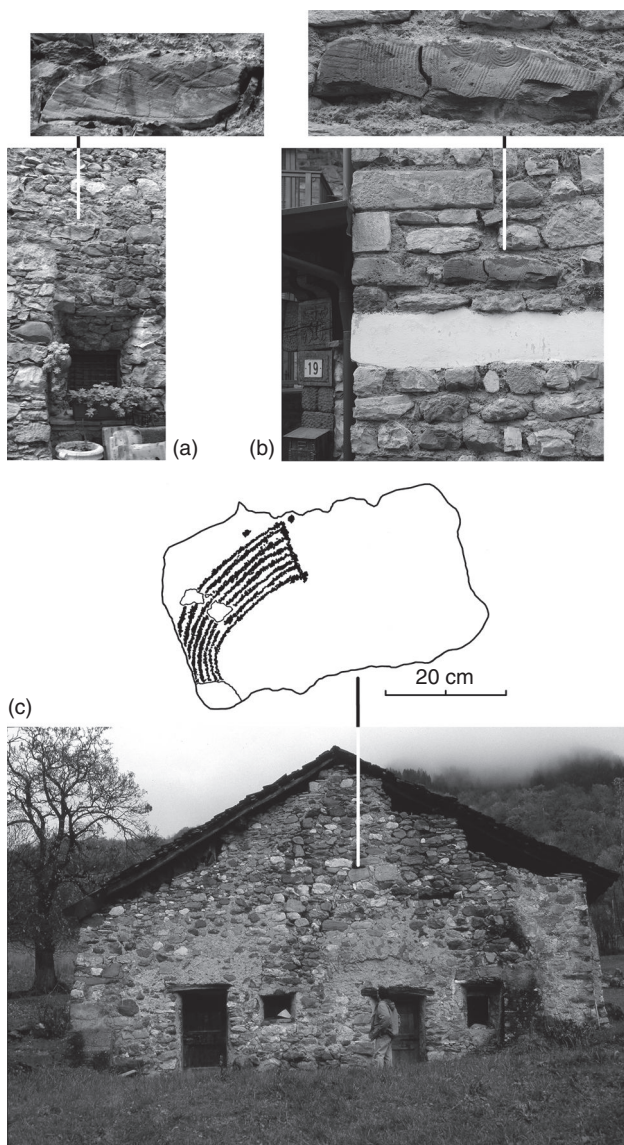


Figure 12.7. Examples of 'special' incorporation of statue-menhir fragments, visible from the street, in houses at Ossimo (a) and Borno (b); and on the front of a farmhouse at Camerata in the Lòzio Valley (c). Drawing by Angelo Fossati, *Le Orme dell'Uomo*, from F.G. Fedele, A. Fossati and A. Giorgi, 'Archeologia Preistorica della Valle di Lozio', in preparation.

Table 12.1. Modes of monolith or stone manipulation at Anvòia and elsewhere in the Borno-Lòzio area, Anvòia phase III, Later Medieval (?) to Modern. Ossimo Asnì is a findspot near Anvòia (see Figure 12.1:c), Camerata and Ceresolo are Copper Age sites in the Lòzio Valley, a side valley of the Val Camonica.

KIND AND ORIGIN OF MATERIAL	
<i>a</i> pieces of already shattered monoliths or other stones	examples ^a Anvòia
<i>b</i> whole monoliths, unearthed and displaced by short- or long-range transport	
<i>b1</i> for local reuse	→ U4
<i>b2</i> for discard, to make them disappear	→ U8
<i>c</i> freshly made fragments, from smashing monoliths or further reducing old fragments	
<i>c1</i> for obtaining building material (blocks & débitage)	Anvòia, B, O
<i>c2</i> smashing monoliths for destruction	→ U7
USE OR PURPOSE, AND RESULT	
<i>U1</i> incorporation in walls of rural structures (animal pens) with regard for imagery	Anvòia
<i>U2</i> indifferent incorporation in walls of rural structures (animal pens)	Anvòia
<i>U3</i> indifferent incorporation in walls of town houses	OI
<i>U4</i> placing a monolith as a wayside stone	Asnì
<i>U5</i> 'special' incorporation in the front of farmhouses	Camerata
<i>U6</i> 'special' incorporation in house walls aiming at display on a street	B, OS
<i>U7</i> ^b walling up for hiding or obliteration, to avoid inconvenience or legal troubles	Ceresolo
<i>U8</i> ^b secret discard away from findspot	B

^a B, O: respectively, Borno and Ossimo (town settings); this latter further including OI, Ossimo Inferiore, and OS, Ossimo Superiore.

^b Only documented after c. AD 1950.

On present evidence, Anvòia I to III should be considered as discrete phases with no known continuity between them: snapshots of subsequent 'lives', shining light on the various ages of the site's existence. They describe completely different roles for prehistoric monoliths, from powerful social effigies to intriguing 'pagan' idols, to mere building material. We archaeologists have recently introduced yet a different viewpoint.

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Biography of a Hill

Novi Pazar in South-Western Serbia

Staša Babić

Archaeology is one of the academic disciplines whose aim is to make sense of the past. Among other things, we organize and classify the material culture of the past into distinctive units according to a number of scholarly established criteria. In the course of the history of the discipline, these criteria have changed, and some of the previously prevailing modes of classification have been severely criticized, above all the concept of archaeological culture (e.g. Jones 1997; Canuto and Yaeger 2000; Isbell 2000; Thomas 2000; Lucy 2005). These reconsiderations have brought forward that the past may not have been as orderly organized and readily packed into the units we have designed to manipulate and explain its material traces. Consequently, we have started investigating other possible paths of thinking about the lived experiences of the people whose actions we seek to understand (e.g. Díaz-Andreu et al. 2005; Insoll 2007). However, some of the archaeological practices of organizing our subject of study have remained largely unchanged from the very beginnings of our discipline to the present day, such as defining one of the very basic units of observation—an *archaeological site*. The *archaeological process* may be said to begin ‘at the trowel’s edge’ (Hodder 1999, 92ff.), by distinguishing the features in the soil indicative of past human activities and demarcating their spatial limits. This basic anchoring in the spatial dimension, regardless of subsequent procedures, that may vary significantly depending upon the theoretical and methodological inclinations of the researcher(s) in question (Jones 2002; Lucas 2001;

2012), renders the past tangible and manageable, transforming a patch of land into an object of study, further scrutinized according to a set of rules laid down by archaeologists. Once investigated in their physical form in the field, the sites are converted into a set of information, analysed, commented upon and valorized both by archaeologists and the general public. In the process, some are judged to be more important than the others and lists of particularly valuable sites are compiled, such as the UNESCO World Heritage List.¹

THE EMERGING STATE

In the territory of today's Serbia, there are four such highly valued spots, among them the region of Old Ras around the modern city of Novi Pazar in the south-western part of the country (Pavlović Lončarski 2011). Both geographically and metaphorically, this region, with a number of archaeologically documented structures, lies at the heart of the narrative of the prosperous Medieval state of the Serbs—Raška. During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries AD, this was the seat of the noble family of Nemanjići, whose members founded the autonomous state and autocephalous church of the Serbs through military actions and intricate diplomatic activity, spreading from the Byzantine court in the East, to Rome and further West (Erdeljan 1996, 21ff.; Popović 1999, 31ff.). The extensive archaeological and historiographical research established that their residence—a sort of a 'village capital'—consisted of a complex of several non-fortified palaces, churches and a refugee fortress, scattered over the region of Ras (Popović 1999, 408). Some of the newly formed institutions of the state emerging in the twelfth century AD inherited the buildings already standing in the area, including the church of Saint Peter, which became the centre of the sacral power—the Episcopal—a role which it retained throughout most of the subsequent turbulent history of the region marked by the constant conflicts between the Serbs, the Bulgarians and the Ottoman Empire, well into the eighteenth century AD (Erdeljan 1996, 36; Popović 2000, 210, 230). There is still some controversy over the date of the foundation of this charming

¹ <<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/96>>.

small church (Figure 13.1), which combines the architectural elements of the pre-Romanesque style of southern Europe as well as Byzantine influences (Popović 2000, 224, 231). The first researchers (Nešković 1961; Ljubinković 1970, 171–3) considered it to be an early Christian structure, probably a baptistery, built originally in the sixth century AD with several later reconstructions, the first one dated to the ninth century AD. However, a recent meticulous analysis convincingly demonstrates that this early date and function of the building are not plausible and that it was originally built in the late ninth century AD as a memorial church, and renewed in the first half of the tenth (Popović 2000, 231, 232). The dug-in feature previously interpreted as a baptismal font (Ljubinković 1970, 174–6), is now suggested to be a cache, possibly dated later than the original building of the church (Popović 2000, 224, 232).

The subsequent history of adaptations and additions to the church is even less clear, with only two dates during the period of Ottoman occupation over the region, AD 1728 and 1750, firmly established by written records (Ljubinković 1970, 173). According to the researchers, the stratigraphic situation on the spot is very complex as the plateau around the church has been under almost constant activity (Ljubinković 1970, 173–4). The building itself is surrounded by a



Figure 13.1. Church of Saint Peter, Novi Pazar. Photograph by Petra Marjanović (CC BY-SA licence).

necropolis with more than 100 graves, spanning from the ninth through the twentieth century AD. Although these funerary assemblages may significantly contribute to the understanding of the history of the hilltop at Novi Pazar, only a part of them has been analysed and published in detail (Ljubinković 1970; Erdeljan 1996, 164–5). As a result of this complexity, the erection of the small rectangular *narthex* (less than 4 x 5 metres) to the west of the main entrance is rather vaguely dated into an indefinite time between the original construction of the church and the middle of the fifteenth century AD. On the grounds of the iconographic analysis of the layers of the frescoes on the walls of the church, a tentative suggestion has been put forward that this may have been a part of the renovations undertaken during the fourteenth century AD (Ljubinković 1970, 172). During the restoration of the church in 1957, a group of bronze and ceramic vessels along with gold and amber jewellery were discovered under the foundations of the western *narthex*. Traces of earlier building activity, identified as the remnants of a burial mound were also found below the church itself (Jurišić 1969; Mano-Zisi and Popović 1969, 10, 74; Ljubinković 1970, 173–4). It is with this discovery that the history of the ‘Illyrian-Greek Find’ (Mano-Zisi and Popović 1969), another prominent site on the archaeological map of Serbia begins.

THE ‘ILLYRIAN-GREEK TREASURE’

As testified by the very title of the exhibition (Mano-Zisi and Popović 1959) announcing this discovery and the subsequent more elaborate publication of the material recovered (Mano-Zisi and Popović 1969), original researchers were convinced that some of the most conspicuous objects retrieved from the deposit under the northern wall of the *narthex* were to be associated with ancient Greek bronze and ceramic ware production, belonging to the late sixth or early fifth centuries BC (Mano-Zisi and Popović 1969, 121ff.). Although no human remains were uncovered, the assemblage was soon added to the list of the so-called ‘princely graves’, elaborate funerary constructions of Early Iron Age temperate Europe (Wells 1980; Palavestra 1984; Babić 2002, 2004). One of the main concerns of research on these graves in the Central Balkans, which are closely associated to similar finds in Central and western Europe, has been to establish the modes of

interaction between the continental hinterland and the Hellenic culture (Babić 2002, 2007), in particular through finds of Greek manufacture such as black-painted pottery and bronze vessels. The bronze *hydria* (Figure 13.2) found under the foundations of the church of Saint Peter at Novi Pazar, with its *kouros*-shaped handle (Mano-Zisi and Popović 1969, 78, pl. IIIa; Babić 2004, 98, 155), the black-figured *olpe* with the image of Dionysus (Mano-Zisi and Popović 1969, 77, pl. Ia, b; Babić 2004, 98, 158), and almost 500 amber beads and plates with incised images resembling those of Achilles or Hector (Mano-Zisi and Popović 1969, 81, pls. 31, 32; Palavestra and Krstić 2006, 87–9, 94ff.), affirmed the ‘unbelievably constant, hidden, but eventually very clear connections to the Greek world’ (Mano-Zisi and Popović 1969, 50).

However, the splendour of these objects thus overshadowed the context of these finds. The gold and amber jewellery was found inside an oak chest (Mano-Zisi and Popović 1969, 9, 73). At the time of the discovery, the wood was poorly preserved in the humid soil, but its dimensions were recorded—1.85 x 0.83 metres. It was orthogonally placed in relation to the northern wall of the church *narthex*, which ran over its middle (Figure 13.3). The bronze and ceramic vessels were found adjacent and to the north of the chest along the church perimeter itself (Mano-Zisi and Popović 1969, 11, 75). The excavators



Figure 13.2. Bronze *hydria*, Novi Pazar. © The National Museum in Belgrade.

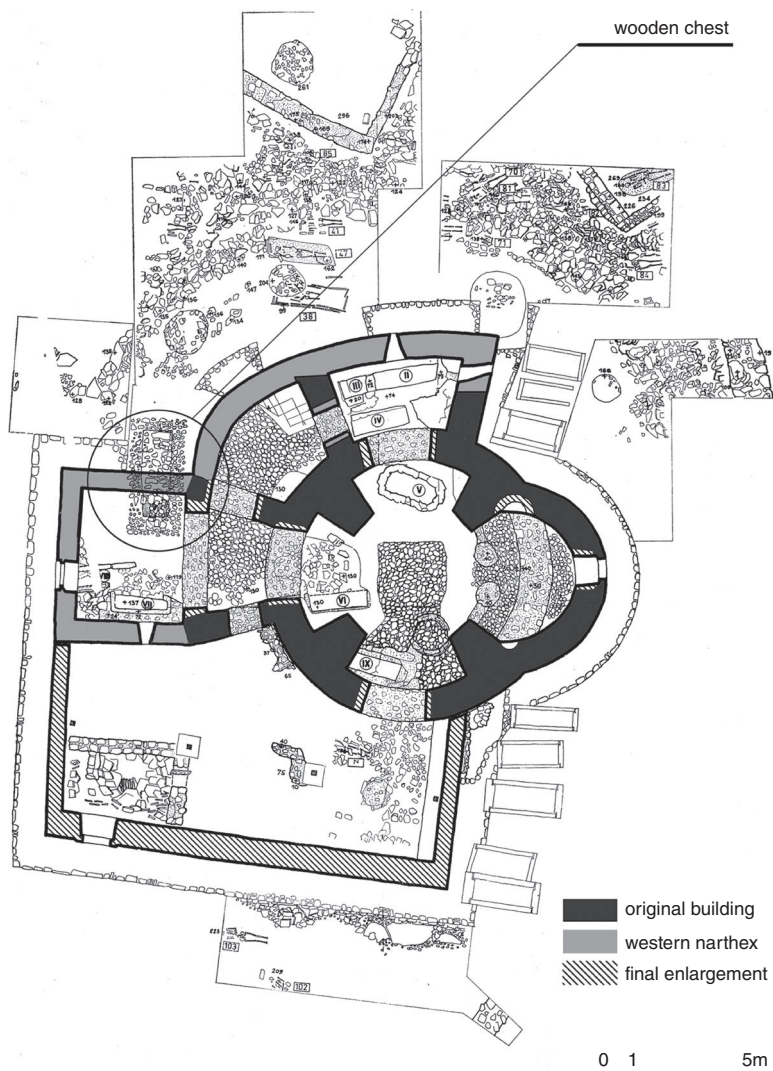


Figure 13.3. Plan of the church with the location of the chest. Drawing by Nikola Stjepović.

believed that these exceptionally valuable objects were in fact grave offerings that had been removed from the body of a dead person and laid in a separately dug chamber, lined with pebbles and slate blocks, in order to avoid the damage that would have been induced by the

funerary pyre (Mano-Zisi and Popović 1969, 9–10, 73–4). In other words, it was the builders of the fifth-century BC burial mound who deliberately and purposefully collected the most treasured objects, placing them in the chest and, as a part of the rite, laying it at the fringe of the mound, away from the body of the deceased. This highly unusual practice has not been recorded in any of the other so-called ‘princely burials’ of the Central Balkan Early Iron Age (Palavestra 1984; Babić 2004, 77ff.). Quite the contrary, the objects particularly significant of the status of the deceased, such as the jewellery and the imported Greek goods, sometimes badly distorted by flames, are closely associated with the body of the exceptional individual whose role in the community they are aimed to announce (Babić 2004, 102–9, *passim*).

At the same time, some of the *insignia* normally associated with this status, namely warrior’s equipment, are conspicuously absent from the Novi Pazar find, an anomaly that, the excavators argued, could be explained by the objects having been laid with the body and/or the treasure being ‘of feminine character’ (Mano-Zisi and Popović 1969, 11, 75). However, there may be another pattern emerging from the recorded conditions of the find: that of a wooden chest in shape and dimensions closely resembling a coffin and its contents consisting of bodily ornaments, amber and golden jewellery, all of which would stand for the body of the deceased. The objects found outside of the chest, but in close proximity—bronze and ceramic ware—may have been separated from this representation of the body of the deceased placed in a coffin because, according to the rules governing this act of deposition, they did not belong together. Again, this logic does not correspond to the established practice of the other known ‘princely graves’ of the region, but it may be echoing another principle, that of Christian burials, where the grave goods are mainly limited to parts of costume and personal jewellery, while containers of any kind are not recognized as appropriate. The assumption is emphasized by the fact that the bronze and pottery vessels were placed not only outside the chest, but outside of the church wall.

The complex stratigraphy of the area inside the church of Saint Peter and in its immediate surrounding makes it difficult to discern the sequence of events at the site. However, after the original publication of the treasure from the chest, a new piece of information emerged, possibly shedding some more light upon the problem. In 1985 a fragment of an amber cup was found some 45 metres away from the chest, to the south-west of the church, and was interpreted

as a Medieval censer, chiefly because it was discovered in a stratigraphic sequence dated to the thirteenth century AD (Vujović 2001). Yet, its technical and stylistic qualities are much more in accordance with the amber ornaments from the chest and other 'princely graves' of the Early Iron Age. Indeed, Palavestra and Krstić (2006, 284–5) have suggested that the object should be associated with southern Italian workshops of the sixth and fifth centuries BC (Palavestra and Krstić 2006, 284–5). It is intriguing, though, that it was found some 45 metres away from the chest, to the south-west of the church. If its highly plausible early dating and stylistic association to the amber beads from the original Early Iron Age assemblage is accepted, the explanation for this dislocation may be that, throughout the whole history of the erection of the church and its subsequent renovations and enlargement, the Medieval builders had an intense involvement with the previously existing structures—a much stronger involvement than previously thought.

OVERLAPPINGS

For example, it may be worth reconsidering the particular example of two of the graves of the necropolis surrounding the church. They are reported to have been dug into the construction of the Iron Age mound and lined with the stone slabs 'taken from the construction' (Ljubinković 1970, 185). No offerings were registered and the date of the construction of these graves remained open, with only a cautious remark that they pre-date the thirteenth century AD, equally possibly ascribed to the time of the erection of the Iron Age burial mound and the Early Slavic period (ninth to eleventh centuries AD) (Ljubinković 1970, 185–6). Although recorded as early as during the first systematic research into the necropolis surrounding the church, these graves have been largely neglected in the later considerations of the relation between consecutive periods of activity on the spot. Equally interesting is the passing remark on the position of another grave, an oval-shaped stone construction 'situated directly upon the prehistoric construction of the mound' (Ljubinković 1970, 188). The only registered grave good was a small fragment of a glass vessel, tentatively dated to the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries AD (Ljubinković 1970, 188–9). A human skull was found in a small niche under its eastern

wall, and a small amount of fragmented human bones was registered scattered throughout the earth filling the grave. The plastered bottom of the grave was broken through by a later burial dug into the same construction. In the north-western corner of the grave the researchers discerned the 'periphery of a prehistoric pit, probably a part of the funerary pyre' (Ljubinković 1970, 214).

The puzzling stratigraphic evidence in the churchyard of Saint Peter's is not exhausted by these examples. Over the whole area circular pits with various fillings are recorded, at least one of them interpreted as a secondary burial (Ljubinković 1970, 207–8). Furthermore, certainly increasing the complexity of the situation, the traces of a possible Bronze Age burial below the Iron Age one are also reported (Jurišić 1969, 41). Unfortunately, these traces of the Bronze Age activity have not been analysed nor published in detail, so at this point it is only possible to infer that the prominent hilltop attracted the attention of the nearby inhabitants well before the Iron Age. Faced with this overwhelming abundance of material respectively dated over a long time span from the Bronze Age up to the early twentieth century AD, the field researchers repeatedly emphasized the ambiguities of the stratigraphies documented in and around the Novi Pazar church (Ljubinković 1970, 174). One particular remark on the subject may deserve special attention:

Strong posts and walls have cut through the construction of the funerary tumulus [. . .], considerably damaging² the stratigraphy.

(Mano-Zisi and Popović 1969, 10, 74)

The focus of the attention of the authors of this observation was the Iron Age 'treasure', with its eye-catching bronze, amber and golden items, black figure pottery and its Greek provenance. From this point of view, the foundations of the church built centuries later, in spite of its own historical importance, are *damaging* the record and confusing the researchers. The 'undamaged' stratigraphy, it follows, would be the one where the object of research is covered by an intact layer of soil. The activities occurring after (or, indeed, before) the scope of the particular time segment are thus disturbing, even corrupting the 'pure' original archaeological record—the *archaeological site* we set

² In the parallel Serbian–English publication, the translation into English uses the word 'confusing' (Mano-Zisi and Popović 1969, 74), but in the Serbian original the word is *ošteti*, i.e. 'to damage' (Mano-Zisi and Popović 1969, 10).

off to investigate, even if they have been unfolding on the same spot. Consequently, the investigators tend to discern the limits of particular units of research, cleansing them from non-pertinent disturbances. Just like the researchers of the Iron Age 'princely grave' at Novi Pazar considered the posts and walls of the Medieval building damaging to their efforts to fully investigate the burial, the scholars whose task has been to reconstruct the phases of erection of the church of Saint Peter didn't care much about the traces of previous occupation on the hilltop.

DEMARCATIONS

In the process, *two archaeological sites* emerged on the same spot, each with its own research agenda. The spatial demarcation of an area identified by the presence of the material traces of past activities is supplemented by the temporal demarcation into the distinctive segments, which were then valorized separately. Thus, the early Medieval church, with its historic significance for the foundation of the Serbian state, and the Iron Age burial of a prominent individual in some kind of contact with the classical Greek font of civilization became the landmarks in the archaeological literature of the region. On the other hand, the Bronze Age occupation of the place, as well as the periods of the Ottoman dominance in these parts, and the burials interred around the church as late as the nineteenth century AD, are all mentioned only casually. Above all, the relationship between the two most highly esteemed features—two *archaeological sites* on top of each other, sharing the place, but perceived as chronologically remote, has remained unexplored. Later re-examinations of the Iron Age burial did indeed bring forth modest suggestions that these two sets of data are connected in a way more meaningful than unconscious disturbances. The chest containing the Iron Age 'treasure' may not have been a part of the original burial rite, but a consequence of a respectful act of the builders of the western *narthex*, faced with the traces of the previous occupants of the hill (Babić 2004, 99; Palavestra and Krstić 2006, 89). In order to bring these suggestions a little further, it may be useful to turn once more to our basic assumptions about the nature of the archaeological record.

In 1985, Linda Patrik wondered if there indeed was an unequivocal and unified notion among archaeologists on the nature and contents of ‘an archaeological record’. She identified no less than five possible meanings of the term, spanning from past objects and events, material deposits, material remains, to archaeological samples and, finally, archaeological publications (Patrik 1985, 29–30). Ignoring the last two possible readings of the term, Patrik concentrated on the first three, eventually offering the basic distinction between the two models in which archaeologists approach their subject matter—the physical and the textual. The distinction may in fact reflect the two concepts of the archaeological record, one treating it as comparable to a contemporary material context, yet remote in time, and the other emphasizing its fundamentally historical nature (Lucas 2012, 8). These two sets of premises about the archaeological record may be equated to the main schools of thought identified in the history of the discipline: the physical model is seen as typified by the culture-historical and processual strands of research, while the textual model is recognized in the post-processual approach (Jones 2002, 10–11, 17). Lucas (2012, 8) on the other hand, has argued that:

I would argue that both the textual and physical models of Patrik’s scheme are in fact examples of the same ontology, one which sees the archaeological record in terms of a past ‘present’, and that there is in fact no model in contemporary archaeology which adequately covers the second ontology—a historical ontology of residues.

(Lucas 2012, 8)

This brings us once more to the issue of time. Over the last couple of decades, archaeologists have acknowledged the need to reconsider the temporal dimension of our subject matter and the ways in which we tend to bring order into the passage of time (Gosden 1994; Murray 1999; Olivier 1999; Lucas 2005). More often than not, it is the spatial variations in material culture that we translate into the temporal, the most obvious example being the stratigraphic sequence, where the layers *below* are expected to be *before* (Lucas 2005, 33ff.). This ultimately leads to the ‘Pompeii premise’—the strong conviction that the archaeological remains can be regarded as if the actions that produced them stopped just a moment before we unearth them. This was the topic of the hot debate between Lewis Binford (1981) and Michael Schiffer (1976; 1985), two prominent processualists, but some thirty years later it is still highly relevant when

discussing the ways in which we decide upon the scope, both spatial and temporal, of the archaeological record we set off to investigate (Lucas 2001, 148–52; see also Murray 1999; Jones 2002, 13–14; Lucas 2005, 33–4). Schiffer's argument (1976; 1985), in short, was that the material remains of the past we unearth are not the direct representation of past events, but have been changed by various subsequent processes. He discerns two broad sources of these changes: N-transforms, or natural or environmental processes, such as weathering or climatic changes, and C-transforms, or cultural processes influencing the record, such as discard practices, reuse of objects, and, most importantly for our present purpose, *disturbance activities*. Binford's objection (1981) concerns primarily the logic of C-transforms, since it implies some original pristine state of the record—Pompeii under the ashes, 'a past "present"' (Lucas 2012, 8), subsequently distorted by some other kind of human activity. Yet, in Tim Murray's words: 'it is impossible to know exactly where to stop the process of controlling for distortion unless you already know what the pristine, undistorted form was' (Murray 1999, 18).

TRANSFORMATIONS IN SPACE AND TIME

Let us now return to the plateau around the church of Saint Peter. The site is far from being unique in its muddled stratigraphy, and the mutual *disturbances* of built structures and dislocations of objects from their presumed original position. This caused problems in chronological attributions, most notably in the dating of the fragment of an amber vessel determined predominantly on the grounds of its stratigraphic position which neglected its other characteristics and shifted the attention of the author in the direction of inadequate analogies (Vujović 2001; Palavestra and Krstić 2006, 284–5). Moreover, the entire exercise of phasing the site—dividing it into distinctive periods according to stratigraphy and translating the spatial dimension into the temporal one (cf. Lucas 2005, 38–9), ended up in emphasizing their separation rather than the possible connections over time. Finally, some of the phases received much more attention by researchers, due to their perceived importance for the history of the region, while the less attractive ones slipped into obscurity. The researchers have in fact created two 'past presents', purging them of a

vast quantity of C-transforms. It is therefore worth bearing in mind that 'even under the best of circumstances the archaeological record represents a massive palimpsest of derivatives from many episodes' (Binford 1981, 197; see also Lucas 2005, 37). The quest for the pure, original record, frozen in time, may considerably hinder our ability to observe its intertwined multiple temporalities, reaching from various points in the past to the present we inhabit. These temporalities do have different resonances in the present day (Lucas 2005, 26, 41–3), but the reduction to an orderly sequence of events, clearly demarcated into separate units of respective historical importance neglects their mutual relationship. What's more, these respective units of past events are deprived of their own temporal dimension—their own past (cf. Bradley 2002). By reducing them onto a single mark on our linear chronological sequence (Lucas 2005, 41–3), we exclude the possibility that the people of the past(s) had their own perceptions of *their own past* and interacted with its physical remnants in ways other than *disturbing* them.

Bearing in mind these remarks, the hill over the modern city of Novi Pazar and its rich *palimpsest* of multiple overlapping activities (see also Lucas 2005, 37ff.) may be approached from a different angle: instead of looking for 'pure' layers representing separate moments of activity, we can search for interactions over time, in those fuzzy areas where they cross the boundaries set by archaeological practice. The oak chest and its contents need not represent a single moment of deposition, 'considerably damaged' by later builders of the western *narthex*, in their turn corrupting the 'original' church plan, but an accumulation of practices, each in relation to the previous. From this point of view, the answer to the conspicuous absence of the body (bodies) buried in the Iron Age mound may be sought for in the puzzling skull found in the niche of the oval-shaped stone construction 'situated directly upon the prehistoric construction of the mound' (Ljubinković 1970, 188). At the same time, our understanding of the religious practices of the Medieval builders of the western *narthex* and their sense of their own past may be enriched. On the grounds of the analysis of the Medieval funerary monuments of the region, it has already been suggested that 'religious life in a patriarchal rural community, especially that under the Turkish rule, developed essentially within the framework of beliefs and rituals of the old, pre-Christian religion' (Erdeljan 1996, 204, *passim*). Rather than supposing that these old, pre-Christian mores were preserved in some

unfathomable mysterious forms, we can search for their materialized expressions. Finally, the stratigraphy of the hill at Novi Pazar may prove to be less confusing if we approach it with different expectations, posing different questions about the archaeological record. From this line of investigation a less orderly past may emerge, but a past inhabited by acting people, with their own attitudes towards the places they chose for their graves and churches.

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What Happens When Tombs Die? The Historical Appropriation of the Cretan Bronze Age Cemeteries

Borja Legarra Herrero

INTRODUCTION

Nobody can escape the past on Crete. The remainders of the past are part of the lives of modern Cretans in a way that is applicable to earlier historical periods (Bradley 2002, 112–13). It could at first be thought that the present awareness of the past may be a consequence of the long history of archaeological work on the island, or the modern emphasis in developing attractions for the tourists (Duke 2007), but the truth runs much deeper. Any conversation with people in a small village discovers a rich rationalization of the remains of the past that is mostly independent of modern interpretations of Minoan culture. This understanding cannot be entirely explained either by the proud look of the past that defines important aspects of modern Greek and Cretan identity (Hamilakis 2007), but it relies heavily on their everyday experience of the place where they live, and on the human necessity of making sense of their immediate world. Particularly, given the agricultural emphasis of the island, the earth, and what it contains is intimately known. It was not unusual (and it is still not unusual) for archaeologists to conduct *Kafenio* (local coffee shop) surveys, in which a friendly chat at the local coffee place can shed much information about the archaeology of the area. Local knowledge is detailed and exhaustive and therefore a rich source of information. While locals may not be aware of what the site may be, concentrations

of ceramics on the ground, piles of stones traditionally known as *Trochalos* (Xanthoudides 1924, 54) or memories of find-spots of strange or valuable items are part of the local shared knowledge.

There are a couple of good reasons that allow us to project this picture onto the past. First, the intrinsic knowledge of the land where one lives may be assumed to be a trait of any population. Second, the island had one of the most archaeologically complex Bronze Age civilizations in Europe, lasting for more than a millennium (Table 14.1). This resulted in an exceptional number of Bronze Age constructions that on many occasions took the shape of quite monumental buildings, including ashlar blocks. Also, most natural prominent places, such as caves, springs, or the tops of mountains had a noteworthy Bronze Age use. The regionally articulated structure of the Cretan palatial system (Middle Bronze Age and Late Bronze Age periods) means that monumental buildings are found across the whole of the island's landscape, including difficult-to-access areas and barren landscapes. A good example is the case of Zominthos (Figure 14.1), a large, carefully constructed building located 1,200 metres above the sea level, at an altitude well above the cultivation threshold (Sakellarakis and Panagiotopoulos 2006). There is not an area on Crete in which there is not a substantial Bronze Age site by its architecture or/and size. Furthermore, most of the sites contained rich material assemblages. While ceramics are normally found in small pieces and may be difficult to imagine in their original form for the untrained eye, many other items recurrent in these sites' record are much easier to engage with by people with no archaeological knowledge. This is the case of metal items, particularly gold, but also seal-stones, figurines, etc. A fortuitous discovery of material in the area

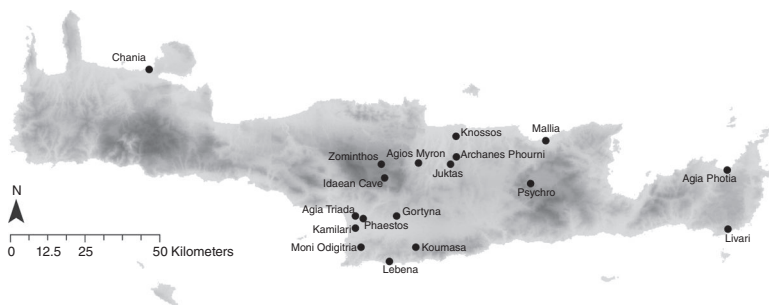


Figure 14.1. Sites mentioned in the chapter. Map by Borja Legarra Herrero.

Table 14.1. Abridged chronology of Crete from the Early Bronze Age to the Roman period.

Chronology	Period	Main events	
3100 BC	Early Bronze Age I		
3000 BC			
2900 BC			
2800 BC			
2700 BC	Early Bronze Age II		
2600 BC			
2500 BC			
2400 BC			
2300 BC	Early Bronze Age III		
2200 BC			
2100 BC			
2000 BC			
1900 BC	Middle Bronze Age I	First palaces on Crete	
1800 BC	Middle Bronze Age II		
1750 BC	Middle Bronze Age III	Second Palaces	
1700 BC	Late Bronze Age I		
1600 BC	Late Bronze Age II	Third Palaces	
1500 BC			
1400 BC			
1300 BC			
1200 BC	Late Bronze Age III	Destruction of Palaces	
1100 BC			
1000 BC			
900 BC			
800 BC	Subminoan		
750 BC	Iron Age (Protogeometric)		
700 BC	Iron Age (Early Geometric)		
600 BC	Iron Age (Late Geometric)		
500 BC	Archaic		
400 BC	Classical		
320 BC			
200 BC			
100 BC	Hellenistic		
65 BC			
0			
AD 395			
	Roman	Roman Conquest of Crete	

of Agios Myron attested in two documents from the late seventeenth century AD (Chaniotis 1989) presents a good illustration of how such an occurrence may have taken place before modern times.

There are few places in Europe that can match Crete in terms of the sheer amount of Bronze Age remains, their pervasive presence in the whole landscape of the island, and the widespread monumentality that would have caused them to remain visible features in the landscape for many centuries after their abandonment.

To match this outstanding Bronze Age record, there is an extensive knowledge of the archaeology of the island. More than 100 years of excavations by teams from several countries has led to the uncovering of a large and diverse archaeological corpus, allowing several reviews of Iron Age and Classical attitudes towards the Bronze Age remains (Alcock 2002; Lefèvre Novaro 2005; Prent 2005). Unfortunately, there are problems that have undermined the potential of such studies. Minoan culture, as defined by Arthur Evans at the beginning of the twentieth century AD, has attracted most archaeological interest, to the extent that until the 1980s most of the historical evidence found on top of the Bronze Age remains was barely recorded or even published. It has only been recently that scholars have started to pay more attention to the historical levels and to study them to analyse Classical responses to the Bronze Age past (Prent 2003; Cucuzza 2013).

Despite these shortcomings, Crete remains a privileged laboratory for the study of approaches to the past in the past (Coldstream 1998; Alcock 2002; Prent 2003; Lefèvre Novaro 2005; Prent 2005; Cucuzza 2013; Federico 2013). For example, it has been suggested that the necessity in Hellenic times to reassess local identities in a context of heated competition between settlements drove the interest of Cretans to revisit Bronze Age sites. Formalizing a connection with the Bronze Age ruins would have allowed communities to construct identities linked to an imagined past that could help them to claim control over the territories around the settlement (Alcock 2002; Federico 2013).

New paradigms in the study of material culture are offering fresh perspectives on the engagement of historic populations with Bronze Age remains (Olsen 2010; Knappett 2011; Hodder 2012). The Bronze Age ruins are no mere recipients of later human behaviour, but they brand a material agency that shapes the types of responses they may engage. This opens new avenues to understanding the relation between the Iron Age and Classical populations with their Bronze Age past. The monumentality, constant presence of sites and the material culture attached to the remains demanded a place for the sites in the world-views of Cretan populations during the first millennium BC and AD. Studying how Cretans tried to make sense of the outstanding Bronze Age sites from this theoretical point of view may provide a better insight into the way Cretan historical populations engaged with these monuments.

THE ALWAYS PRESENT BRONZE AGE LANDSCAPE

For the purposes of this article, the Bronze Age sites of Crete can be divided into three broad types: habitation and industrial sites (settlements, isolated farmsteads, workshops, etc.), cemeteries, and cult places normally in remarkable natural sites. The last category refers mainly to caves and the idiosyncratic ‘peak sanctuaries’ typical from Bronze Age Crete. Peak sanctuaries are cult areas found in certain mountain tops of the island. Their cultic use is defined by a heavy deposition of material, mainly ceramics and terracotta figurines that on some occasions are accompanied by standing architecture (Nowicki 1994). Each of these sites was probably related to a settlement, and they may have helped to communicate settlement identities at a regional scale (Haggis 1999). The most famous of these sites, the one at the top of Mount Juktas, near the settlement of Knossos, included large buildings (Figure 14.2), built terraces, altars and a rich collection of figurines amongst other items (Karetsou 1981). The discovery of vases and the heads of several animal votives dated to



Figure 14.2. View of the Bronze Age remains at the site of Juktas. Photograph by Borja Legarra Herrero.

the Late Geometric period indicates that the site continued to be used for cult activities during the Iron Age (Karetsou 1976). The mountain top is well documented to have been considered by certain Classical traditions the place where Zeus was buried (Prent 2005, 319) and therefore it maintained its religious significance in Historic times. A Roman altar with an inscription dedicated to Zeus, currently reused in a local church, may have come from the site (Karetsou 1981) which would mark the last phases of cultic use for the site.

Cretan caves have been used since Neolithic times, first for habitation and during the Early Bronze Age they slowly became burial grounds; in the Middle Bronze Age they converted to cult places, a role that they kept in successive periods until Classical times. Every well-preserved cave on Crete produces evidence of Bronze Age, Iron Age and Classical use. The best recorded examples are the caves of Psychro in the area of Lasithi (Rutkowski and Nowicki 1996; Watrous 1996) and the Idaean cave in the spectacular landscape of the Nidha Plateau. This last one is probably one of the most important Iron Age sites in the Aegean (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis 2013), as it was widely regarded as the place in which Zeus was brought up guarded by the Korybantes, making it a sanctuary with significance well beyond Crete. The fact that the cave has produced some of the finest Iron Age objects found in the south Aegean, including rare imported objects, proves the importance of this cult place until the sixth century BC. Such relevance diminished in the next few centuries to acquire more importance again during the Roman period, when a large altar carved outside the entrance and significant amounts of material indicate a new ritual interest for the cave (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis 2013). Again, as in peak sanctuaries, the natural characteristics of caves made them prone to continued cult use from the Bronze Age to the Roman period and beyond, although one should be careful not to assume that the predecessors of later Classical cults are necessarily found in the Bronze Age, as it is discussed below. Remarkable points of a landscape may attract attention in several periods, but a link between the uses of the site in the different moments of the history of the site must be proved rather than assumed.

The case of the reuse of settlements is much more complex to follow. Most significant Bronze Age settlements tend to be continuously in use until Roman times, and several of them, such as Chania, to the present day. This makes a possible study of the historical reuse

of Bronze Age remains difficult to undertake. The case of Knossos is a good example of these difficulties. It was continuously occupied from the Neolithic to Late Antiquity, and the early excavation of the site recorded only lightly the evidence of the Classical use of the palace, the most prominent feature of the Bronze Age site in terms of its commanding location and monumental architecture. The Classical city does not seem to have expanded to cover the palace but it is unclear whether the area was kept as a place of cult (Prent 2003; D'Agata 2010). Classical sources speak about a temple of Rhea near the site, but Arthur Evans's identification of an area in the palace as such a temple remains elusive (Coldstream 2000, 284–6). A securely identified temple of Demeter was discovered south of the palace (Coldstream 1973) but it is not known whether its position relates to the Bronze Age remains.

THE RICHNESS OF RESPONSES: BRONZE AGE TOMBS ON CRETE

The third category of sites are the cemeteries—a particular type of site that requires a bit more attention but whose study provides more rewards. Cemeteries are normally well-defined sites in the landscape. They are not as big as most habitation sites, forming an easier to understand feature than the sprawls of material and architecture that are the normal footprint of a settlement. Moreover they were, in most cases, abandoned in the Bronze Age so there is not a continuous use that masks the archaeology of the site. In many cases tombs were still constructed in a monumental way, with large boulders and thick walls, particularly both the Early and Late Bronze Age *tholos* tombs. This means that several of them would be visible in Iron Age and Classical times. Some of these tombs were still partially visible before their excavation in the early twentieth century AD, such as Kamilari (Levi 1963; Girella 2012), Agia Triada (Banti 1933; Cultraro 2004) or Chrysolakos at Mallia (Demargne 1945). More importantly, the abandonment of these sites during different points of the Bronze Age, probably means that social knowledge of the nature of the site was lost. Only in certain cases the funerary nature of some of the latest Late Bronze Age tombs seems to be remembered in the Iron Age, such as in the North Cemetery at Knossos

(Coldstream and Catling 1996), but the cases are few. Most tombs were probably not easily identifiable by their function as fragmented human bones would not be easy to identify as burial remains. Nevertheless, together with the remarkable architecture, these sites—particularly the Early Bronze Age examples—contained a large amount of material, including easily recognizable items such as metal weapons and figurines which would have set them apart in the historical landscapes of Crete.

Unfortunately, the lack of consistent recording of non-Bronze Age levels during the excavation of the tombs create problems in order to make a survey of the historical use of the more than 500 cemeteries known in the island. A quick review of recently published cemeteries, however, seems to indicate that most abandoned Bronze Age cemeteries were used in the Iron Age and Classical period.

The Early Bronze Age I cemetery of Agia Photia was composed of hundreds of small rock-cut tombs, some of which included geometric sherds (Davaras and Betancourt 2004, 183). At the Early Bronze Age *tholos* tombs of Lebena a Hellenistic terracotta figure was found over the collapsed tombs, and Roman material was also present in one of the identified robbing pits (Alexiou and Warren 2004, 181). At the tomb of Monastiriako Kephali at Knossos much material was found dated from Geometric to Roman times, including an Attic import (Preston 2013, 43, 84). The tomb was abandoned at the end of the Bronze Age, but it lay so close to the Classical town that all the historical material may indicate later occupation in the area and may not be related to a reuse of the tomb. At the Early Bronze Age *tholos* of Moni Odigitria only a few Classical and Byzantine sherds were found on the surface (Vasilakis and Branigan 2010, 135) indicating very sporadic use, and at *Tholos* B at Koumasa two Roman tombs were found (Xanthoudides 1924, 4). At the small *tholos* tomb of Livari, Hellenistic buildings may indicate non-cultic reuse of the cemetery (Papadatos and Sofianou 2012). Almost all these cases represent recently reported cemeteries, which suggests that most Bronze Age cemeteries saw reuse in the Iron Age and Classical times. But before delving into the nature of this widespread reuse and its reasons, it would be useful to examine in detail a couple of better-understood examples.

The aforementioned North Cemetery of Knossos was discovered by rescue excavations in the 1970s and well published in the 1990s (Figure 14.3).

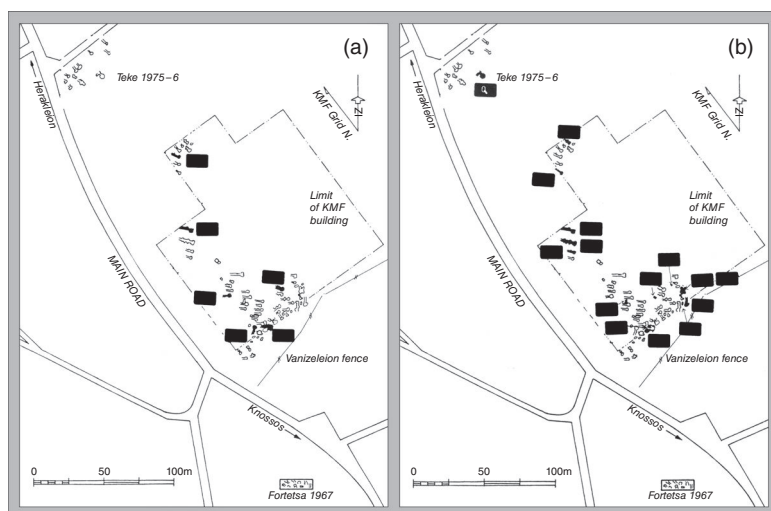


Figure 14.3. Plan of the Knossos North Cemetery. (a) Tombs of Bronze Age type; (b) Tombs with Bronze Age *larnakes*. After Coldstream 1998, figs. 5.1 and 5.2. Reproduced with the permission of the British School at Athens.

The cemetery presents an interesting insight into the complex relation of Iron Age funerary customs with Bronze Age tombs. It has been argued that several of the tombs in this cemetery were Late Bronze Age tombs that were reused in the ninth century BC (Cavanagh 1996), when most of the other tombs may have been constructed imitating their Bronze Age counterparts. The ninth-century-built tombs contained several Bronze Age *larnakes* (clay coffins) (Figure 14.4). These were at least 400 years old when they were reused, probably for the interment of infants (Coldstream and Catling 1996; Coldstream 1998). In addition, a sealstone and a large *pithos* jar of probable Bronze Age date were found in the cemetery, reinforcing the idea that links with the past were actively sought by certain members of this community. Knossos presents a rare case in which the funerary nature of the areas of the site continued from the Bronze Age into the Classical period. In this particular case it has been suggested that rising aristocratic powers at Iron Age Knossos linked to Bronze Age material in order to cement ideologically their privileged position (Coldstream and Catling 1996, 719). However, the richest tombs of the cemetery were not the ones containing the



Figure 14.4. Late Bronze Age *larnax* found in Tomb 107 of the Knossos North Cemetery, Side A. After Morgan 1987, fig.4.

larnakes (Kotsonas 2006), which suggests that links to the past were only part of a wider range of strategies of social competition. The creation of connections to the past was a choice that cannot be solely explained as a means to gain a more favourable social position but may depend also in a broader set of beliefs.

At the Early to Late Bronze Age cemetery at Archanes Phourni (Figure 14.5) the best published tombs suggest that most of the thirty-odd Bronze Age tombs may have seen some kind of later activities taken place in them. The geometric *pithos* found at the Early to Middle Bronze Age I *Tholos* Gamma provides the best known example (Papadatos 2005, 48–50). This light use contrasts with a more significant presence of Roman material around the cemetery (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, 160), which is best illustrated by the rich evidence from the very well-preserved Mycenaean *Tholos* A (Figure 14.6). The reason this *tholos* was found is because while most of it lay under the soil, the highest part of the vault survived. It is thought that in Roman times a small door was opened in the visible area of the vault to access it (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, 159). The shelter continued to be in use in historical times, amongst other things as a hiding-place during the German occupation of the island in the Second World War. The nature of the Roman use of the tomb is unclear. The main chamber was found

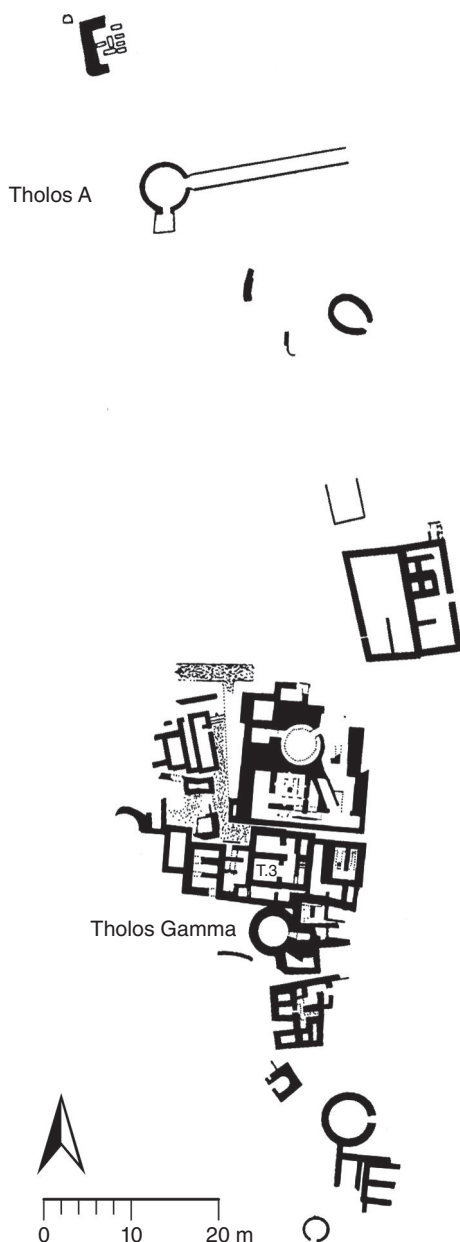


Figure 14.5. Plan of the Archanes Cemetery. Modified by Borja Legarra Herrero from Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakaki 1997, drawing 35.



Figure 14.6. *Tholos A* at Archanes. Photograph by Borja Legarra Herrero.

empty, which may indicate looting, although one would expect some of the Bronze Age ceramic material to have survived as in most of the other looted Bronze Age tombs. Even more puzzling is the delimitation of a small area outside the entrance of the *tholos* with upright slabs. The material evidence from this area points towards a domestic use, although it is possible that this was a temporal installation used by Roman robbers during their attempts to access the tomb (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, 160).

Finally, the area in the west Messara around the site of Phaestos is particularly interesting. Here several cemeteries have yielded evidence of Iron Age and Classical reuse. The best example is the site of Kamilari, not far from Phaestos. This is a group of two independent *tholos* tombs constructed in the Middle Bronze Age period. The best known, *Tholos A* (Figure 14.7), was very well preserved and it had standing architecture visible before its excavation in the mid twentieth century AD (Levi 1963). It was used in the Late Bronze Age and it contained also several fragments of eighth- and seventh-century BC ceramics, perhaps indicating funerary reuse of the *tholos* tomb in Archaic times (Lefèvre Novaro 2005, 188–90). Badly eroded remains

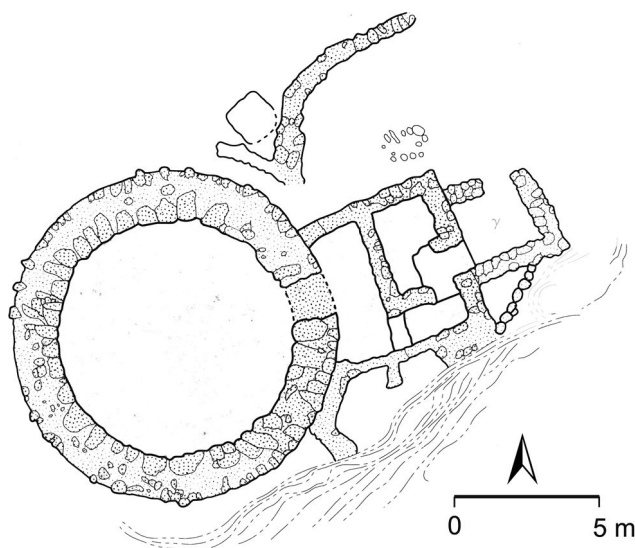


Figure 14.7. Plan of *Tholos A* at Kamilari. Modified by Borja Legarra Hertero from La Rosa 1992, fig.14.1.

of a building containing more than 400 clay figurines were found near the *tholos* tomb (Cucuzza 1997). The architecture and votives seem to indicate that this may have been a small rural shrine devoted to Demeter and Kore built in the fifth century BC and mainly used until the third century BC. This dedicated building and the repeated deposition of votives are typical of a small rural shrine and it provides the strongest evidence available of a formalized and sustained Classical cult related to a Bronze Age tomb. The site of Agia Triada is not far from Kamilari and Phaestos. This is a small Bronze Age settlement that had an Early to Middle Bronze Age *tholos* cemetery near it. In the seventh century BC a wall was constructed around the Minoan *tholos* cemetery, and a couple of bronze figurines of bulls found in the area indicate ritual use of this area (Cultraro 2004, 324) as part of a broader reuse of the site for cult in the Archaic period (Palermo 2004; Cucuzza 2013). The use of these two Bronze Age sites as small rural cult places has been seen as an effort by the city of Phaestos of establishing its regional ascendancy in the face of growing competition from their neighbours, in particular the city of Gortyna (Alcock 2002; Lefèvre Novaro 2005, 108–10). However, the sites seem to have housed different cult activities with different intensity and

slightly different dates, which suggests that the historical reuse of the cemeteries seems to obey other reasons besides possible geo-political interests.

WHAT ROLE FOR THE PAST: HELLENIC DEVOTEES OR ROMAN ROBBERS?

This preliminary review indicates the complexity of not only the dataset, with several different types of preservation and reported details, but also in the pattern of reuse of the tombs. Despite this diversity, a picture of the reuse of Bronze Age tombs has slowly arisen in the academic literature.

During the Iron Age and Hellenic period, tombs seem to have been used as powerful social arenas in which links to the past could be constructed to strengthen social and political positions. In the case of Knossos in the Iron Age this seems to be played at a local level, marking social differentiation in the community (Coldstream 1998). By the Hellenic period, competition seems to be played more in a regional scale in which competing city-states tried to demonstrate their regional power against each other (Alcock 2002, 107–9). This is normally thought to be built on strong ideological and religious grounds, and most of the Hellenic material found in the tombs tends to be interpreted as the evidence of cult activities, such as libations to the ancestors (Lefèvre Novaro 2005).

This mix of cult and politics is argued to have declined in the Roman period. Alcock suggests that the new Roman order made it unnecessary to revisit the past to assert local identities (Alcock 2002, 117–19). Roman identity seems to put an end to regional competition and the manipulation of the past may have moved towards large-scale imperial policies. Roman materials found in tombs tend to be interpreted as signs of robbing and other secular use of the tombs. The Greek gentle and spiritual engagement with their past seems to be replaced for a more practical Roman approach to the exploitation of the landscape. For example, the excavators of Archanes have interpreted both the opening at the top of *Tholos* A and the small delimited space in the *dromos* as part of the Roman efforts to loot the site (Sakellarakis and Sapouna-Sakellarakis 1997, 158–61), even when a Venetian coin was found in the filling of the tomb. A little

clearer seems the case of the tombs at Lebena, where Roman material seems associated with the disturbances of the tomb (Alexiou and Warren 2004, 181).

However, one cannot but feel slightly uneasy with such a dualistic view of Hellenic and Roman use of the tombs, and it sometimes feels that the interpretations of the evidence follow a rigid interpretative framework that does not necessarily match the variety of the data. The problems should be evident. Despite the name 'Roman', there was probably not a major change of population on the island from earlier periods. Most of the people living on Roman Crete would have felt links with the land surrounding them, running back through their descent line. Roman populations would probably have engaged at the same emotional level with their landscape as the population in Hellenic times. Perhaps the best example of this is the case of the Roman interments on top of the Koumasa tombs, which show an ideological link with the local past. It is possible that detailed analysis of material from other Bronze Age tombs could point to similar responses. As Susan Alcock points out, the general trends in Roman understanding of the past set by the imperial ideology do not exclude other local responses to their immediate landscape (Alcock 2002, 120). While Roman attitudes to the monuments may have been different, it also expresses spiritual interests, even if in a different manner to the way it took place in Hellenic times (Federico 2013).

THE BRONZE AGE TOMBS OF CRETE: AXIS OF INTERPRETATION

New approaches to materiality (Olsen 2010; Knappett 2011) highlight the active role of material in its interaction with people. Materials are not just receivers of action, but agents in themselves. Their nature and characteristics constrain and inspire the way items are employed and in which cultural contexts are deployed and how. Under this paradigm, an alternative window to the study of the reuse of Bronze Age tombs opens. The emphasis placed on the importance of practice in this negotiation between object (or monument in this case) and people (Jones 2007, 34–8), brings the relevance of local, even personal responses to the past to the forefront. While major cultural trends are still relevant, these are only determinant through the everyday practices

of the people that lived in the landscape. The record speaks of a highly contingent response that can only be understood on a case-to-case basis and by taking into consideration the active role of the Bronze Age monuments.

One of the main axes of variation in which the agency of Bronze Age tombs matches local responses is the quality of the preservation of the tomb. It is perhaps one of the main decisive traits in order to understand the historic afterlife of the tombs. This not only refers to the preservation of each of the tombs but it must be contextualized as part of larger phenomena on the island during the Iron Age and Classical times in which Cretan populations create a range of responses in order to engage with standing ruins. The case of Kami-lari presents the scenario of a relatively well-preserved Bronze Age building that could be recognized as such but was at the same time alien in its architecture and contents. The building could not be ignored and therefore local people made sense of it by connecting it with their spiritual worries. Its position as a visible feature in the landscape made it relevant to the population of the broader region and suitable to embody a widely shared social memory (Mills and Walker 2008, 6). Its substantial presence also made it suitable for being intertwined with regional processes such as the use of rural cult sites to help the emerging polis of Phaistos to control its hinterland (Watrous et al. 2004, 396). Knossos presents a similar case in which the response to the ruins of the palace involved also a concerted attitude that took the form of a local shrine (Prent 2003). At the other end of the spectrum we find several cases, such Koumasa or Lebena. The lack of standing architecture made these places less suitable as the avatars of social memories and it established less constraints on the engagement of people with the sites, making the responses less normative, more variable, and not clearly connected to broader socio-political dynamics in the region. Personal decisions or chance occurrences, such as the discovery of interesting items in the vicinity of the tombs, may explain better the reuse of these sites. In Koumasa the unremarkable Roman tombs indicate a personal decision at a low social level that included some kind of emotional connection to the Bronze Age tombs but that escaped broader cult and socio-political patterns. At Lebena the response moved away from cult or ritual and it was one of harvesting the resources that the tomb may have to offer. In this particular case, the large sanctuary of Asklepeios situated not far from the tombs may have been the

focus of the cult activities in Classical times, limiting the placement of social memory in other sites in the area.

Another axis of variability is the extent to which the tombs were recognized as burial places as the recovery of recognizable human remains may also have a great impact in the attitudes to the site. In the case of Knossos, there was still an understanding during the Iron Age that many of these ruins had been tombs. The continuous habitation at Knossos from Bronze Age to Roman times may have helped to preserve some areas in social memory as having particular meanings and roles. The inescapable presence of these old tombs would make them well suited to become significant arenas in the negotiation of social dynamics taking place at the site. Knossos may be one of the few Iron Age communities on the island in which social competition and hierarchization processes were taking place. Associations to the Bronze Age tombs and Bronze Age material culture may have helped to establish a privileged status, perhaps by establishing links to mythical heroes, although such a cult trend is less marked on Crete than on mainland Greece (Antonaccio 1995; Alcock 2002; Lefèvre Novaro 2005). As we move into the Classical period, the funerary nature of the tombs may have been less decisive in creating an engagement with the ruins. This may response to the fact that the awareness of the funerary use was lost, but also as links with the past may have had less important roles in internal social negotiation. It is at this time when the sites of Kamilari and Agia Triada show agricultural rural cults related to the old tombs. The interest of Cretan populations have moved from social issues within a settlement to territorial and political issues in the polis-oriented island landscape and the responses to the Bronze Age sites moved accordingly.

Preservation, as well as social memory, provide an interesting dialectic between monuments and historic populations, between the character of the building and the understanding of the people revisiting it. This may mark a difference in the ways Early and Late Bronze Age tombs were incorporated to local life, as the character of the Late Bronze Age tombs may be easier to identify than the one of the Early Bronze Age tombs. The site, as a clear anomaly in the landscape, demands attention but, on the other hand, it is not just a blank canvas onto which to project the uncertainties and needs of the living populations that visited it. How historical populations approach them depends on a complex mix of cultural, local and personal interests, from cults that help with agricultural uncertainties and

territorial control to the political benefits of the links to the past, from the gaining of material wealth by looting them to the identification of buried ancestors.

CONCLUSIONS

A review of the data available from the Cretan tombs shows how much we are missing. There is a rich history of local responses to the tombs that is barely understood. The appropriation of the past escapes easy characterization by period or region but it awards a rare opportunity to gain an insight into the small-scale histories that form Cretan history. While broader themes such as political competition and agrarian cults help to understand such responses, only a detailed analysis of the agency of each of the monuments in their particular human landscape and the micro-responses they commanded can provide an accurate history of the long and rich afterlife of the tombs.

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Roman Dolmens? The Megalithic Necropolises of Eastern Maghreb Revisited

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INTRODUCTION

North Africa has a rich tradition of archaeological studies. Its origins and early development are linked to the modern colonization of the region by several European powers, but it has also had a remarkable continuity after decolonization, both in international cooperation missions and in solo work developed by the research institutions of the Maghreb states, most particularly in Tunisia. However, this research has been extremely biased as regards the periods and cultures studied, since, due to easy to imagine political reasons related to the European colonization, the Roman period and the remains of early Christianity constituted a primary aim of the research. For this reason, pre-Roman levels that lie below the vast majority of Roman sites have been hardly explored. Although this state of affairs persisted after decolonization, it has been slowly changing in recent years. The situation is somewhat different with regard to funerary archaeology, as North Africa, especially its eastern portion, is characterized by the existence of a surprising number and diversity of pre-Roman sepulchral monuments (there are tens of thousands of recorded monuments) (Camps 1961). Owing to their high visibility, these monuments constitute the best-known aspect of North Africa's

pre-Roman archaeology. Yet, current knowledge on them is still limited due to the small number of excavations that have been carried out following modern methodology. In addition to the large monumental tombs linked to Numidian monarchies (strongly influenced by Punic and Hellenistic models), we can mention, among others, the following types: rock-cut chamber tombs (known as *haouanet*); large mounds that hide funerary chambers that are completely invisible from the outside (at times, they are bordered by more or less substantial walls; they are then called *bazinas*); tower-shaped monuments (called *chouchet* in Algeria); other structures are essentially similar to European dolmens, and still others consist of generally small built chambers surrounded by circular walls and covered by megalithic slabs; very frequently these are also called ‘dolmens’, although they do not have any side access and they frequently do not seem to be collective graves. The latter are the subject of this contribution, since we have been able to go deeper into their knowledge thanks to the excavation and survey work developed since 2006 by the Institut National du Patrimoine and the University of Barcelona—with the collaboration of the Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology (ICAC)—in the Numidian and Roman town of Althiburos and its environs (El Kef region, in the north-west of Tunisia).

STATE OF THE ART

The dolmen-like monuments and chambers surrounded by circular enclosures aroused the interest of researchers since the beginning of the second half of the nineteenth century. It was quickly observed that in the eastern Maghreb these monuments were grouped to form huge necropolises consisting of hundreds or even thousands of such tombs; other types (mainly mounds and *bazinas*) were also present in these necropolises, but in much lower quantity (Camps 1995). These monuments and the macro-sites that they make up have constituted in the last two and a half millennia (at least), and still are at the present time, a very remarkable trait of the landscape.

A number of such structures were also excavated, which revealed the existence in some of them of Punic—and even unquestionably Roman—wheel-thrown pottery. This suggested that these monuments did not date back prior to the third century BC (Camps 1961,

139–43). This position, which was widely shared, was eventually refuted, with good arguments, by Gabriel Camps, who made it clear that these monuments had been reused long after their erection, and put forward a dating between the Late Bronze Age and a rather vague moment, ‘before the Phoenician civilization radiates through the Maghreb’, which was thought to have happened in the third century BC (Camps 1961, 143–8). In 1953, Camps himself conducted, with Henriette Camps-Fabrer, the first methodologically accurate exploration of one of these megalithic necropolises, Djebel Mazela (Bou Nouara, Algeria), where they excavated twenty-four tombs out of a total of more than 10,000 (Camps and Camps-Fabrer 1964). However, the dating of these monuments remained uncertain, given the poverty of the funerary offerings, the complete ignorance about the chronology of pre-Roman hand-made local pottery, and the inability, at that time, to date organic remains. Field research on this matter slowed down thereafter until 2002–2003, when an important (though rather short) project was carried out in a group of necropolises of the Tunisian High Tell (Makthar, Ellès, and Hr Mided) (Tanda et al. 2009). For the first time, the complete analysis of some of these macro-sites was envisaged, involving complete survey and the excavation of one monument. This made possible to obtain two radiocarbon dates for a single dolmen, which are the first ones for this kind of monuments; both correspond to the Hallstatt plateau.

In summary, we can say that, after a century and a half of research on these ‘megalithic necropolises’, knowledge is still very limited, not only in terms of their dating, but also regarding the typology of the monuments that they comprise, the distribution of these macro-sites over the landscape, and even the funeral rites that were practised in them.

THE NATIONAL HERITAGE INSTITUTE (INSTITUT
NATIONAL DU PATRIMOINE, INP)/UNIVERSITY OF
BARCELONA (UB) ‘ALTHIBUROS PROJECT’

The project of the INP and the UB started in 2006 and is expected to continue until at least 2015. Its main objective was to build solid bases for understanding the formation processes of the Numidian states,

whose existence during the third to first centuries BC is known through written sources. With this objective, the two institutions agreed to work at the site of Althiburos, a well-known Roman city with clear indications of a pre-Roman past, and its environs. Althiburos (now El Médéina, ‘the small town’) is located in the north-west of Tunisia, in the administrative region (*gouvernorat*) of El Kef, about 45 kilometres south of this town and 215 kilometres south-west of Tunis (Figure 15.1). This area is part of the Tunisian High Tell, which has always been reputed for its agricultural wealth, especially in Antiquity.

The adopted research strategy combines the excavation of the pre-Roman levels of Althiburos with the survey of its environs, in order to obtain relevant data on the evolution of the territory’s settlement patterns and exploitation, on demography, on the evolution of material culture, as well as on architecture and urbanism (Kallala and Sanmartí 2011; Sanmartí et al. 2012). The digs at Althiburos showed that it was already occupied in the tenth century cal. BC, and archaeobiological data suggest that population increased consistently during the first millennium BC. From the sixth century BC, there is clear evidence of urban changes, culminating in the fourth century BC with

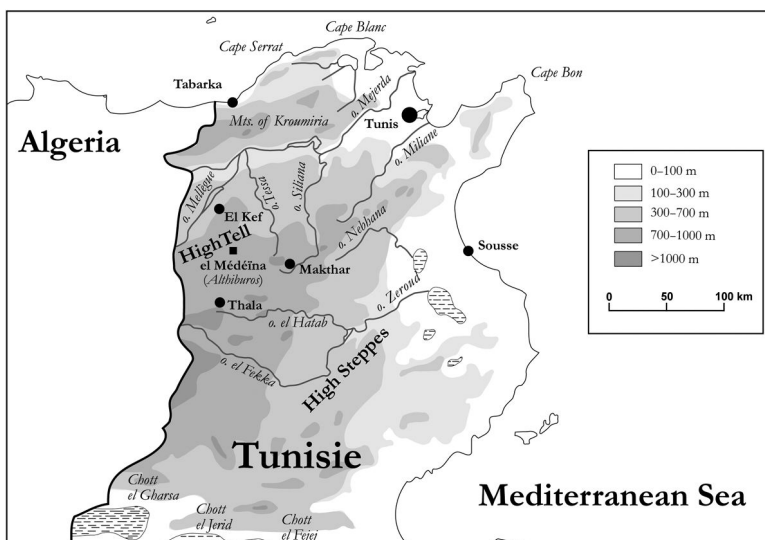


Figure 15.1. Map of northern Tunisia showing the location of Althiburos. Map by Joan Sanmartí et al.

the erection of a defensive wall. These are the first solid data on settlements, lifestyles and material culture of autochthonous communities in the first millennium BC. In general, these data are consistent with the idea that the development of social complexity was linked to the increase of the population density, a process that was obviously favoured by iron metallurgy, already attested at Althiburos by the end of the ninth century BC. This would eventually lead to situations of scarcity, which, in turn, would have prompted the development of political economy and institutionalization. These results constitute a major advance in the knowledge of pre-Roman societies of eastern Maghreb. Nevertheless, this is still far from adequate, since this contribution is very limited from the geographic point of view, and, regarding the chronological dimension, the second millennium BC still constitutes a large gap between the Neolithic period and the Phoenician colonization.

THE MEGALITHIC NECROPOLIS OF EL KSOUR

The Althiburos survey quickly revealed the existence in this area of a megalithic necropolis that was previously unknown in the archaeological literature. This macro-site occupies an area of approximately 10 square kilometres, which stretches over a large part of the El Ksour massif. Given what has been said about the poor state of knowledge on these cemeteries, it was decided to carry out a full survey of the site. This constitutes the basis for the study of typological variation and for the possible identification of specific groups that could guide future research. So far, over 1,000 structures have been documented, of which 795 are certainly funerary monuments, while the rest are simple extractions of slabs that have been abandoned or the remains of possibly funerary monuments that are too damaged to enable identification. This number will considerably increase (perhaps up to 50 per cent) when the survey work is completed (hopefully in 2015).

The vast majority of monuments (678) correspond to chambers surrounded by circular enclosures, although it is possible to distinguish some variants. There are also fifty monuments of a similar type, but surrounded by rectangular enclosures, and sixty-seven that correspond clearly to other types, especially mounds and at least one

huge *bazina*. The latter, especially the larger ones, often lie in the lowlands, even in arable land, while the former are almost always located on the edges of the highlands or immediately below, on their upper slopes. Our research has also led to the excavation of three funerary monuments, all of them belonging to the main type (monuments 647, 42, and 53) (Figure 15.2). One of these (monument 53) has provided very important results with respect to the subject matter of this volume. Monuments 647 and 42 are relatively small in size: the circular enclosure wall is about 5 metres in diameter in both cases, and the burial chambers measure 0.85 by 0.60 to 0.70 metres, and 0.97 by 1.12 metres respectively (Figure 15.3). This size is nevertheless the average of the monuments of this type. The megalithic character of this kind of tombs is given mainly by the size of the slab covering the burial chambers (1.80 metres in monument 647; 2.25 metres in monument 42), well above the length of the latter, even if we considered their external dimensions (1.10 x 1.10 metres in both cases).

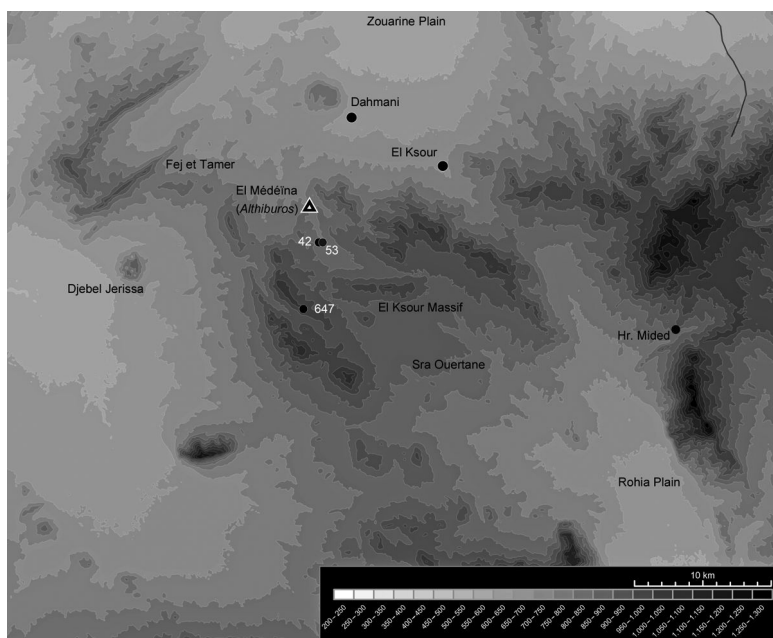


Figure 15.2. Map of the El Ksour massif and its surroundings showing the location of Althiburos and the three excavated funerary monuments. Map by Xavier Bermúdez.

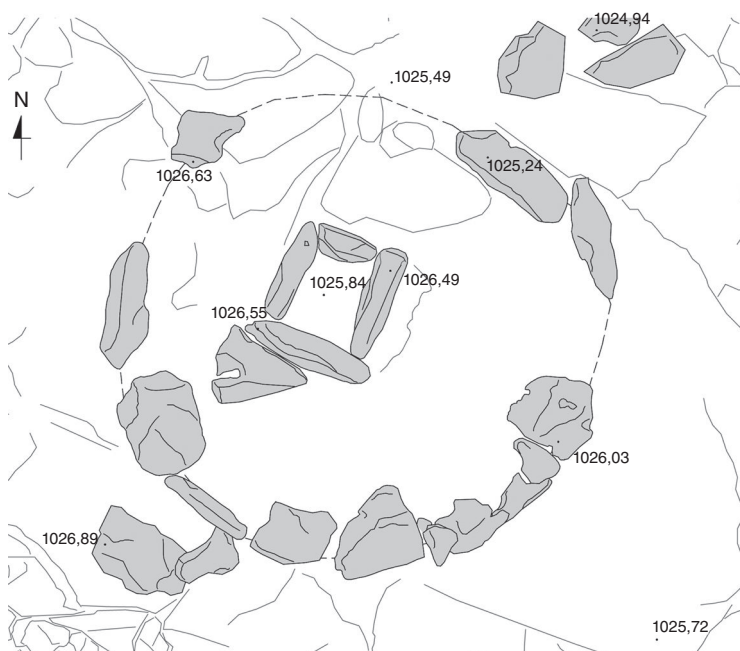


Figure 15.3. Plans of monument 647, before (on top) and after (bottom) excavation. Plans by Unitat de Documentació Gràfica (ICAC).

The funerary chamber of monument 42 was completely sacked, so it could not provide any relevant data, neither about burial rites nor about chronology. However, digging outside the chamber made it clear that the monument was built on a preparation layer containing Punic pottery, whose precise dating is rather unclear. On the contrary, monument 647 was intact. The burial level contained some fragments of human long and skull bones, as well as ribs and two teeth. The small number of human remains, or even their absence, is well attested in different kinds of proto-historic tombs in the Maghreb, including several undoubtedly intact monuments of the same type as our tomb 647 that were excavated by Camps and Camps-Fabrer at Djebel Mazela. It probably involves, as other authors have indicated, the removal of soft tissues of bodies prior to burial, and the subsequent selection of the remains deposited in the tombs (Camps and Camps-Fabrer 1964, 75–9). Such a practice is probably also attested by the finding at Althiburos of some human remains in habitation layers dated to the eighth to fourth centuries BC; we may assume that these were preserved in domestic areas. They suggest very complex funerary rituals, which we are still very far from understanding. Grave 647 contained no funeral offerings at all, but the C14 dating of the skeletal remains situates them in the Hallstatt plateau, that is, in a time span between 700 BC and 400 BC, with a higher probability for the fifth century BC.¹

Tomb 53 is different from the previous two for various reasons. First, for its size, as the circular wall is about 13 metres in diameter and the internal dimensions of the burial chamber are 1.4 by 1.2 metres (Figures 15.4 and 15.5). It is undoubtedly one of the largest monuments of this type located so far in this necropolis. Its construction is also more accurate. Although the slab that covered the chamber was apparently *in situ*, the tomb had been plundered by partially demolishing one of the walls. Fortunately, the looters did not completely empty it, but they stopped at a level of stones that in turn sealed a layer of ash deposited directly on the rocky base. The latter contained some human, non-cremated bones belonging to a very young child, to another rather older one, and to an adult male of probably more than thirty years old. The stones layer that covered

¹ Conventional radiocarbon age: 2390±30 BP. 2 Sigma calibrated results: (95 per cent probability) cal. BC 700 to 700 (cal. BP 2650 to 2650), cal. BC 540 to 530 (cal. BP 2490 to 2480) and cal. BC 520 to 400 (cal. BP 2470 to 2350) (Beta-333228).

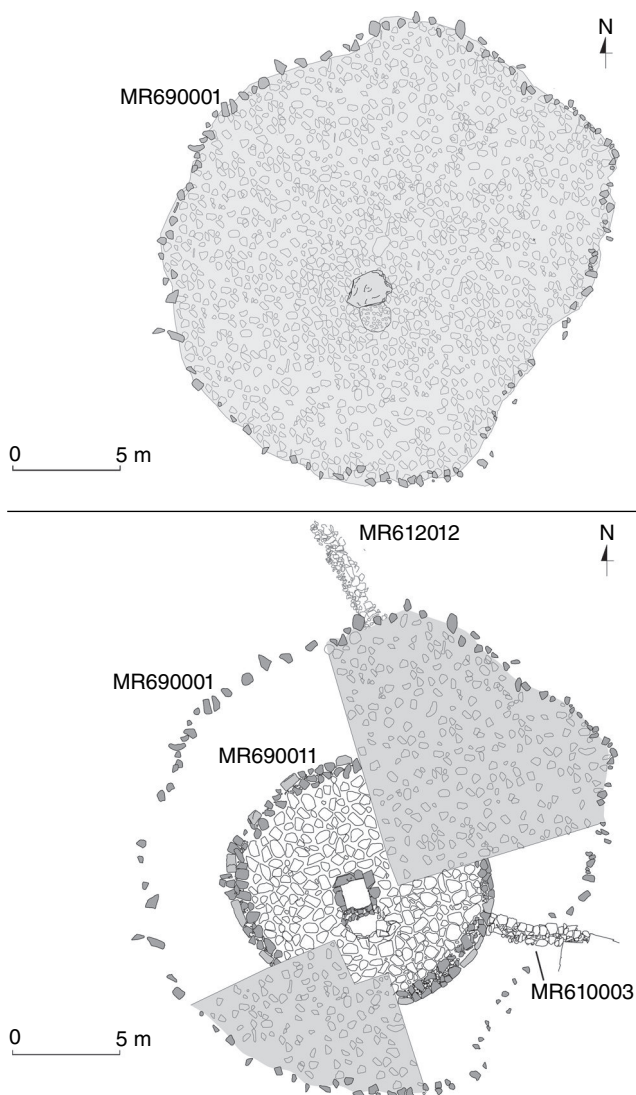


Figure 15.4. Plans of monument 53. Late antique phase on top. Plans by Unitat de Documentació Gràfica (ICAC).



Figure 15.5. View of monument 53 during excavation in 2009. Photograph by Joan Sanmartí et al.

this level also contained some human remains belonging to two children, one of whom was also very young, and to an adult of undetermined sex, aged from thirty-five to forty-five years old. These data indicate that, unlike grave 647, this was a collective tomb, probably belonging to a large family group, and that the children, even the youngest, were recognized as full members of it, at least as regards the funerary treatment they received. As already discussed, these fragmentary remains found in intact layers clearly indicate that the bodies were excarnated prior to inhumation.

The C14 dating of human remains from the ash level deposited at the bottom of the chamber has also given a dating in the Hallstatt plateau, with a higher probability for the fifth to early fourth centuries BC.² This dating is perfectly consistent with the pottery findings in the levels of earth and stones that were deposited between the burial chamber and the circular enclosure wall that surrounds the monument. These are mainly local hand-made red-slip cups, of types that have been dated from the eighth to fifth centuries BC in the digs at Althiburos. They are probably the remains of the ceremony that accompanied the foundation of the monument, though not excluding

² Conventional radiocarbon age: 2480 ± 40 BP. 2 Sigma calibrated result: (95% probability) cal. BC 780 to 410 (cal. BP 2730 to 2360) (Beta-283142).

the possibility that some had been deposited on the occasion of later funeral ceremonies or rather of rituals related to the worship of the ancestors. Considering both pieces of evidence (C14 dating and ceramic typology), a date in the sixth to fifth centuries BC seems extremely likely for the erection of monument 53. Unfortunately, however, plundering of the burial chamber makes it impossible to know whether it was used on further occasions for funerary purposes. As we shall see, this is a major problem for the interpretation of subsequent, clearly attested, uses of the monument.

The excavation has also brought to light two outer, more or less straight, walls that are probably connected to monument 53. One of them is definitely later—but maybe not much—since it was built against the circular enclosure wall that bounds the monument. This structure extends to the south-west on a length of at least 63 metres. The second one has no physical connection to monument 53, so its dating is extremely loose; in fact, we only know that it was built before the mid fifth century AD. However, the recurrent presence of such structures in the eastern Maghreb's megalithic necropolises suggests that they should rather be dated to pre-Roman times. As for their function or meaning, it has been put forward that they were meant to delimitate specific funerary and cultic spaces, but also to link different monuments, forming nets of a considerable complexity (Gsell 1927, 205–6; Camps 1961, 535–6). Our dig cannot bring more light on this matter, which would require a much larger excavation, ideally of several neighbouring monuments and the intervening area.

Unlike monuments 42 and 647, grave 53 was reused in several occasions after its construction. Although the area in which it stands was conspicuously visited in the later centuries of the first millennium BC and the Early Imperial era, there is no clear evidence of any use of this specific monument until the first half of the third century AD, when two cooking pots were placed on the low circular wall that delimits the building (a casserole similar to types Ostia III, 324 or Hayes 199 and a Uzita 48–1 kettle) (Figure 15.6).

These objects prove the existence of rituals that involved food consumption, which could be linked to new funerary depositions, or perhaps just to the cult of the ancestors. At some moment (possibly in the fourth century AD), a portion of the circular wall was spoiled, maybe as a result of a temporary abandonment. Still later, probably in the middle or second half of the fifth century AD, that is, under the Vandal rule of Africa and a millennium after its erection—as proved

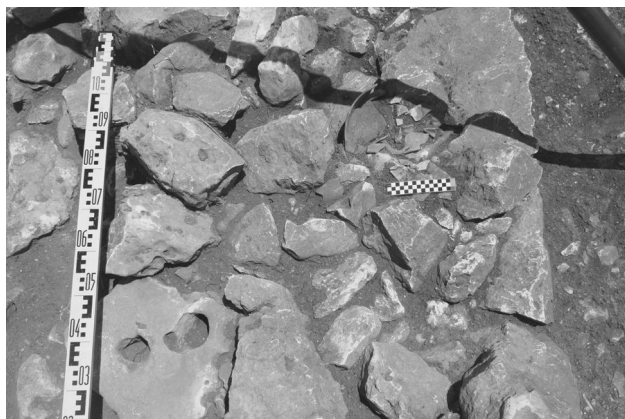


Figure 15.6. View of Uzita 48–1 kettle placed on wall 690011 of monument 53. Photograph by Joan Sanmartí et al.

by several pottery finds—the monument was enlarged to acquire its final form. For this purpose, a large circular enclosure (about 23 metres in diameter), made of only one row of stones, was set out, and several layers of earth and stones were deposited that completely covered the original building. The end of this latest use of the monument cannot be determined, but we can assume that it reached the Byzantine period. Thereafter it was abandoned and remained so up to the present.

DISCUSSION

The Althiburos project has provided important data on different aspects of the megalithic necropolises of the eastern Maghreb. First, it has produced relevant data regarding their dating. In addition to the three absolute dates for the excavated tombs of the El Ksour necropolis, digs at Althiburos itself have given very significant data on the chronology of hand-made Numidian pottery. This, in turn, opens the possibility of dating some tombs discovered in old research works, particularly in the aforementioned necropolis of Djebel Mazela, where eight out of the twenty-four excavated dolmens have produced datable ceramics; they are all dated to the eighth to fifth

centuries BC. In addition, an Attic black glaze *vicup* (that is, a stemmed, double-handled wide cup, intended for wine consumption), dated to the second quarter of the fifth century BC has been found in a monument of the necropolis of Hr Mided, just a few kilometres to the east of Althiburos. This adds to the already mentioned Hallstatt plateau dating of two human bodies found in a tomb of the same site. Although these data are still very limited, they support Camps's view that this type of monument is to be dated between the late second millennium and the middle of the first millennium BC, and that later pottery occasionally found in such tombs only attests subsequent reuses.

The chronological coincidence of a number of monuments in the central centuries of the first millennium BC also supports, to a certain extent, our assumption about population growth during this period, which, in our hypothetical model, would be one of the main causes of sociocultural complexity and the formation of the Numidian states. This and other evidence in the archaeological record and the written sources suggest that these states had begun to arise, precisely in this period, as the result of a process of social differentiation that must have been developing since the beginning of the first millennium BC or even earlier. In this regard, it is important to note the many differences, of several kinds (monument size, construction type and quality, number of individuals buried, presence/absence of ritual practices involving feasting) between monuments 42 and 647, on the one hand, and monument 53, on the other. These differences indicate the existence of a well-established social hierarchy by the mid first millennium BC. According to this, some families would have the right to collective burial, including children, while the vast majority of dolmenic tombs were of small size and must have contained the remains of only one member of the group, probably the head of the family. Monument 53 stands, therefore, as particularly remarkable.

The data from the El Ksour and, still more, from Djebel Mazela and Hr Mided necropolises indicate that, in general, this type of grave had a short lifespan, and that funerary cult was not a recurrent practice, at least over long periods. It is true that the presence of wheel-made pottery in a number of monuments excavated during the early stages of research on this type of site can be interpreted as an indication of reuse in the last centuries of the first millennium BC, or even in Imperial and Late Antique times. However, reuses do not seem to be very frequent and, at any rate, the poor quality of the

documentation on these cases prevents any clear interpretation. In the case of monument 53, though, we have a sufficient, if limited, amount of data to try to understand the respective natures of the two new lives that took place centuries after it was erected. These later lives developed in extremely different historical contexts and have quite different traits. Consequently, their respective natures must also be of very different kinds.

A second life of monument 53 is well attested during the second to third centuries AD by the deposition of the above-mentioned cooking vessels on its outer wall. Given the plundering of the sepulchral chamber in an undetermined (very probably modern) date, we cannot be sure as to whether these offerings are linked to new funerary depositions, or if they just attest some kind of cult to real or (rather) imagined ancestors. Neither can we assert whether these vessels indicate an occasional or a more or less permanent activity. Be it as it may, the important question is why a six or seven centuries old monument was being reused at that time, about three centuries after the effective incorporation of this area to the Roman Empire, by the creation of the *Africa Nova*. It goes without saying that the cultural, social and economic situation had undergone dramatic shifts. As regards the diffusion of properly Roman cultural forms, the evidence from Althiburos indicates that they spread quickly. For example, the hand-made Numidian pottery that was still dominant in the first century BC was rapidly replaced by Roman ceramics, including cooking ware, during the first century AD. As for the burial practices, the one dolmen of the town's southern necropolis that has been excavated was still used by the very early first century AD, but the tombs around it, that are dated to the first to third centuries AD, have nothing to do with the autochthonous traditions. What is more, the urban elites of the Early Empire erected several tower-like mausoleums of a very classical type on the periphery of the town area. Althiburos became a roman *municipium* during Hadrian's reign, and the city progressively adopted the monumental elements characteristic of Roman towns, a process that culminated with the erection of a *capitolium* in Commodus' reign. Of course, this does not mean that Althiburos became a purely Roman city. Suffice it to say that the persistence of the *tophet* (that is, open-air votive sanctuaries in which urns containing the cremated remains of infants and animals are found) until the second century AD (Kallala et al., forthcoming), as well as the use of the Punic language in some *ostraca* (pottery shards

with scratched or painted inscriptions) dated well into the Imperial period. Add to this the persistence in Roman times of pre-roman, Libyan and Punic personal names (Kallala et al., forthcoming).

Otherwise, the spread of urbanization did not cause ethnic identities and tribal social structures to be eradicated. Both urban and tribal organizations did coexist, and some cities were certainly ethnic centres (think, for example, of *Thubursicu Numidarum*, whose tribal organization persisted after becoming a *municipium*, under Trajan) (Gasco 1982). But this would not suffice, by itself, to explain the revival of monument 53 in such a late date as the second to third centuries BC. Who, then, did promote it and why? To our mind, the answer must be sought in the social sectors that not only did not benefit from the order imposed by Rome, but were harmed by it. The nature of these changes is still poorly understood, particularly with respect to the starting point, that is, the situation in the Numidian period, for which we have very little information. Recently, however, Elisabeth Fentress has formulated an interesting hypothesis on these issues (Fentress 2006). According to her, the tribal structures on which Numidian society was partially based would have prompted the persistence under the Numidian kingdoms of forms of collective ownership of land by rural communities. These would allow for mechanisms to ensure safety through interfamily and communal solidarity in difficult moments and, consequently, would facilitate social stability. Integration into the Roman order would not have posed a significant shift for the Numidian elites, nor, at first, for the majority of the population. However, progressive market expansion—which is well attested, for example by the disappearance of the domestic production of hand-made pottery and by the increasing imports from distant origins—as well as the imposition of the Roman fiscal organization, progressively favoured a production system disconnected from local needs. Meanwhile, the communal possession of land was progressively replaced by state-owned or private property. The arrival of veterans and other groups of Roman citizens who sometimes possessed their own separate administration (*pagi civium Romanorum*) must have played an important role in the expansion of this new market-based economic system. The Musulami's rise of the years AD 17–24 could be interpreted as an early sign of a process of loss of land by rural communities in favour of private owners or the Roman state. In spite of the absence of clear indications of socioeconomic tensions during most of the Upper

Empire—in fact, the Musulamii were definitely settled under Trajan's rule (Kallala 2005)—the final outcome must have been the emergence in the rural areas of a class of impoverished peasants, whose voice might not be easily recognizable in the archaeological record. These, in addition, lacked the resources that were provided by communal solidarity in a tribally based society. In short, a social group that had all the reasons to feel the independent past as a time decidedly better than living under the order imposed by Rome. This could have played a major role in forging a deliberately retro-reconstructed memory and in (re)defining an identity that, as put by D. Mattingly (2011, 204–18), was 'discrepant' in relation to the official 'Roman' one, as a result of a daily experience that did not match the rosy picture of a happy Africa made prosperous and civilized by the Roman rule. One symbolic expression of this discrepant identity might have been, among others, the recovery, several centuries after its erection, of monument 53, one of the most important tombs of the large El Ksour necropolis, formerly belonging to the Numidian elite. This might have been used for worship of alleged ancestors, or perhaps for a new funerary use. More than innate conservatism in a part of the native rural populations of the eastern Maghreb—which should at any rate be explained and justified—the new life of this monument can be understood in the context of the inequalities created by the order imposed by Rome, exactly in the same way that adherence to Roman cultural norms from other social sectors—especially urban population—could not be understood without the benefits and opportunities provided by the Roman order.

We do not know exactly when this monument's second life came to an end, but an important section of the circular low wall that bounds it was spoiled at some time between the late third and the first half of the fifth centuries AD. This almost certainly indicates that it had lost any cultic or funerary function. Then, probably by the mid-fifth century AD, a third life started with the enlargement of the monument to reach a diameter of about 23 metres. What might be the reasons that led to this second revival of monument 53 is something we may only guess at, but they must be quite different from those that motivated the second life of the third century AD. This stems from two important facts. On the one hand, the monument was not only reused, but also actually rebuilt and monumentalized. On the other, the socio-political context had dramatically shifted, with the recession of Roman central power and the eventual establishment of the Vandal

kingdom, actually recognized by Rome by the treaties of AD 435 and 442. The nature of the Vandal political rule and the settlement forms of the Vandal people have been, and still are, widely discussed (Modéran 2002; Merrills 2004; Bockmann 2013), but to our mind the crucial matter is the recession of any centralized power, which might have favoured the expansion of tribal entities. Such a view is perfectly compatible with the evidence from Althiburos. The city was still occupied (maybe even densely occupied) during the Vandal period and a catholic bishop is mentioned in AD 481. Nevertheless, urban life, in its political expression, did clearly decay. Indeed, the excavated areas around the capitol indicate an occupation that is domestic and artisanal in character, and so, very different from that of the Imperial era (Kallala and Sanmartí 2011). In such a context, reshaped, tribally based ethnic identities would have found a good opportunity for legitimization in the revival of the old funerary monuments that were so present (owing to their visibility) and also so different from the materiality of the sociopolitical order that was fading away.

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Part III

Recapitulation and Conclusions

The Plot Against the Past

Reuse and Modification of Ancient Mortuary Monuments as Persuasive Efforts of Appropriation

Estella Weiss-Krejci

“The present could not effect its seizure of power over other times if it were not for something in human beings in complicity with it” writes Alexander Kluge (1990, 20) in *The Assault of the Present on the Rest of Time*.¹ Kluge is concerned with condensed dramatic cinematic time and his present now lies several decades in the past. However, the image of an empowered present plotting against a defenceless past presents itself as an adequate point of departure.

Reuse and modification of ancient monuments after extended periods of disuse—monuments herein defined as anything from monoliths and sarcophagi to large earthen mounds and wooden or stone buildings—are frequent phenomena throughout the world.² Reuse can range from one-time visits and the placing of human remains and artefacts to the rearrangement of architectural elements and remodelling of entire structures. No cultural continuity is required (Bradley

¹ Kluge’s article is an English translation of excerpts from his 1985 book of the same title *Der Angriff der Gegenwart auf die übrige Zeit*. Kluge’s 1985 film of the same German title (in English: *The Blind Director*) is only loosely based on the book.

² E.g. L’Helgouach 1983; Patton 1993 for Brittany; Holtorf 1998 for Germany; Williams 1998; Semple 2013 for England; García Sanjuán 2011; Boaventura et al. 2014 for the Iberian peninsula; Thäte 2007 for Scandinavia; Blake 1998 for Sardinia; Middleton et al., 1998, 299–301; Weiss-Krejci 2011, 116–17 for Mesoamerica, etc.

1993, 117–21) for discontinuous reuse can bridge centuries and even millennia.

Reuse of monuments is an ongoing phenomenon. Not only prehistoric monuments but also historic monuments have been affected. I therefore will follow Taylor's lead (Taylor 2008, 24), overstep the disciplinary thresholds and not pay attention to a prehistory-history distinction. The term prehistory was only born in the early nineteenth century AD (Rowley-Conwy 2006; Taylor 2008, 2) and people who reuse or manipulate monuments do not draw lines between historic and prehistoric monuments.

Additionally, the onset of modernity brought along expanded chronological constructions of time. How we from the so-called Western World look upon the past and our expectations of the future not only has made us more time conscious in relation to the present but entirely changed our conceptualization of time (Koselleck 2004). To historians and archaeologists time is stratigraphic and sequential. Archaeologists are concerned with fixing objects and events in their proper place and time. Today most people look at the past with a temporal depth to it (Dodgshon 2008, 6). However, the way we look at time is not how everybody else conceives of it. Different cultural contexts create different concepts of time (e.g. Lévi-Strauss, 1970, 16; Hirsch 2006). In pre-industrial societies the past was probably more of a 'static counterworld' (Dodgshon 2008, 3).

A vast literature discusses the mnemonic character of monuments (e.g. Bradley 1993; Dietler 1998; Williams 2006; Jones 2007; Chadwick and Gibson 2013). However, the purpose of reuse is not about giving testimony of past events 'but about making meaningful statements *about* the past in a given present' (Holtorf 1998, 24). Additionally, the way archaeologists apply the term 'memory' has little to do with memory as defined by the cognitive sciences. Although 'cultural memory' (*kulturelles Gedächtnis*, Assmann 1992) covers a much longer period of time than communicative memory, which usually only lasts up to three generations, the kind of memory involved in ancient-monument reuse most closely resembles what Bloch calls 'evocation'. Bloch (2012, 189–90) distinguishes remembering (inscription of information about the past in the nervous system of individuals); recollecting (consciously recognizing information from the past); recalling (when remembering involves expressing the contents of this knowledge to others in language) and evoking (speech about events in the past which are not clearly linked with individual memory). Evocation promotes appropriation.

DISCONTINUOUS REUSE OF MONUMENTS AS ACTS OF APPROPRIATION

Appropriation and property primarily revolve about access to some resource that exists in space. Monuments usually are someone's possession, or they are contested. In order to persuade others to make up and change their minds about property, people use various strategies and arguments (Rose 1985; 1994). Carol Rose interprets claims of ownership as assertions or stories, in which a potential 'possessor' is sending a message that others will understand and find persuasive as grounds for the claim asserted (Rose 1994, 25). To her 'property is persuasion' (Rose 1994, 297). While narratives, stories, and rhetorical devices may be essential in persuading people, among some groups and peoples vision becomes the essential part of the rhetorical and persuasive equipment of property:

Unlike the sense of hearing, on this account, vision occurs with minimal reference to time, since the eye can capture a whole scene more or less synoptically and need not depend on memory of developments that only unfold over time. [...] With respect to time, then, vision gives the impression that time does not matter, that the past will be like the future, that experience itself is logically irrelevant to the way events play out. This is because, in the visual metaphor of the 'real world,' experience never transforms or changes anything.

(Rose 1994, 270–1)

Vision and visual metaphor thus can be rhetorical modes of great power in the way people think about property (Rose 1994, 265–8). The metaphor tells a story in one image without resorting to long narratives. A monument is an ideal metaphor; a perfect tool to evoke the past.

STRATEGIES OF APPROPRIATION AND THE USE OF MORTUARY MONUMENTS: LESSONS FROM HISTORY

Evocation of appropriated ancestors in the House of Habsburg

Genealogical appropriation is a common phenomenon among kinship groups around the world. It has been excellently documented for

Medieval noble houses of Europe. Karl Schmid originally defined the Medieval noble house as something that expresses its self-esteem 'through its tradition and cultivation of this very same tradition—real or made up—and thus through the assumption of a spiritual and material inheritance, including dignity, origins, kinship, names and symbols, position, power and wealth'³ (Schmid 1957, 56–7, my translation). Schmid's concept was later used by Lévi-Strauss (1982, 174) in order to develop the idea of the house as a type of universal social institution. In the meantime, the 'Lévi-Straussian' house has been recognized as institution in many types of societies throughout the world (e.g. Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Chance 2000) albeit the construct has been controversial and much debated (Ensor 2013, 13–16).

A primary concern of all Medieval European noble houses was what medievalist Karl Hauck (1950, 187) has called *Geblütsheiligkeit*, which means holiness or 'sacredness' (*Heiligkeit*) of 'blood' (*Gebliüt*). In order to enhance the status of the blood line, royal families often used a strategy of *Ansippung* (Hauck 1950, 221) (*an*-, 'attaching to'; *Sippe*, 'kin group') by which important persons from the past—heroes, saints, legendary kings, etc.—were appropriated by the kinship group. Whether forebears were truly related in unilineal, bilateral or imaginary manner was only of secondary importance as long as their association with the group lent it importance (Hauck 1950; Schmid 1957, 57). If the group can persuade others that it is a unilineal descent group, even when devoid of a biological basis, it will be considered as such. This phenomenon has been observed for many areas of the world.

In Medieval Europe the creation of fictive descent through genealogical appropriation was often directly linked to the use and reuse of monuments. Especially the appropriation of specific burial places provided visible proof to claims for ancient connections by noble houses. For example, German Roman King Rudolph I (AD 1218–1291) (Figure 16.1), the first king ever to come from the House of Habsburg, suffered from a lack of illustrious forebears and therefore was berated *comes minus ydoneus* or *pauper comes* (improper or poor count) by his contemporaries (Lhotsky 1944; Lenz 2002, 69). When he felt that

³ 'In seiner Tradition und in der Pflege derselben—sei sie vorhanden oder geschaffen—, in der Übernahme also eines geistigen und materiellen Erbes. Würde, Herkunft, Verwandtschaft, Namen und Symbole, Stellung, Macht und Reichtum rechnen dazu.'



Figure 16.1. Rudolf I of Habsburg (AD 1218–1291) in his coronation harness. Larger-than-life bronze figure at the Hofkirche in Innsbruck (Austria). As a consequence of contact with countless hands of church visitors the cod-piece lacks a dark patina. The figure was cast in the first part of the sixteenth century AD when codpieces were prominent additions to full harnesses of high-ranking aristocrats. Photograph by Estella Weiss-Krejci.

death was close he rode to Speyer on his horse, ensuring to be buried there by all means. Speyer cathedral was the burial place of the former Holy Roman emperors from the Salian and Staufien dynasties. The place had been out of use for several decades. One day before his death Rudolph exclaimed the famous words at Germersheim

(Germany): ‘On to Speyer, where more of my ancestors are, who have also been kings’ (Meyer 2000, 19; Weiss-Krejci 2005, 158). That Rudolph’s so-called ‘ancestors’ were biologically unrelated to him did not matter. He was buried in Frederik Barbarossa’s empty sarcophagus that had been vacant for one century—Barbarossa’s mortal remains were never returned from the Holy Land (Prutz 1879; Schäfer 1920; Klimm 1953, 55; Gut 1999, 103).

A different mode of appropriation was pursued by Rudolph’s descendant Emperor Maximilian I (AD 1459–1519). Once the House of Habsburg had turned into one of the most powerful dynasties of Europe, mostly through intermarriage with other royal houses (Luxembourg, Valois-Burgundy, Trastámara, Jagiello) the need for illustrious ancestors became even more urgent. Maximilian employed several court genealogists who were sent out to consult archival sources and tombstones in order to trace house history and provide justification for its rule. In the earlier stages, Maximilian favoured descent from different branches of ancient Roman nobility (Bietenholz 1994, 200; Kellner and Webers 2007, 137). Later, the Roman connection was downplayed in favour of Merovingian descent from Hector of Troy, since descent from Troy also demonstrated the antiquity of other ruling European houses, especially the Habsburg’s biggest rival, the French house of Valois. Needless to emphasize that most of these genealogies were extremely bold constructions (Bietenholz 1994, 200; Pollheimer 2006; Kellner and Webers 2007, 124).

No one better understood the purpose of monuments than Maximilian himself:

who does not take precautions to create remembrance while alive will have no remembrance after death and will be forgotten with the first toll of the bell and therefore the money that I spend for remembrance is not lost, on the contrary the money that is saved in my attempt to create my remembrance eventually will suppress my future remembrance.⁴

(Maximilian Weisskunig I, cited from Pollheimer 2006, 165, my translation)

⁴ ‘Wer ime im leben kain gedachtnus macht, der hat nach seinem tod kain gedächtnus und desselben menschen wird mit dem glockendon vergessen, und darumb so wird das gelt, so ich auf die gedechtnus ausgib, nit verloren, aber das gelt, das erspart wird in meiner gedachtnus, das ist ain undertruckung meiner kunftigen gedächtnus.’

The ultimate three-dimensional realization of all these efforts was Maximilian's plan for his tomb. Forty statues of real and fictive bilateral ancestors were to surround his dead body. Today only twenty-eight of these survive (Oberhammer 1935; Bietenholz 1994, 201). They include some real kin like Rudolf of Habsburg (Figure 16.1) but also fictive ancestors, such as Ottpert, a mythical Merovingian prince that linked the Habsburgs with the Merovingians. In the end, Maximilian's dead body was not buried with the statues but in a humble grave at Wiener Neustadt (Austria) (Weiss-Krejci 2008, 186). The massive tomb at Innsbruck (Austria) remains empty (Figure 16.2).

Maximilian also used ancient mortuary monuments in order to create connections with the past. Around AD 1500 an excavation took place in southern Styria near Leibnitz (Austria), in the area of the ancient Roman city of Flavia Solva. During these excavations a glass urn containing cremated bones and a coin were found. On 22 May AD 1506—in the Gregorian calendar—these remains were reburied at Graz Castle (Austria), behind a stone slab (removed in the nineteenth century AD, today in the Joanneum Museum at Graz). The slab



Figure 16.2. The cenotaph of Emperor Maximilian I at the Hofkirche in Innsbruck (Austria). Twenty-eight larger-than-life bronze figures cast in the sixteenth century AD surround an empty tomb and represent real and mythical kin. Photograph by Estella Weiss-Krejci.

inscription informs us that: 1) VENERAND·VETVSTATI (in veneration of antiquity), 3) CINERES·ET/OSSA·ROM·CVM·VITRO·INTEGRO/NVUMISMATEQ·ANTIQVO APVD·LEY/BNICUM·EEOSSA (the ashes and bones of a Roman citizen together with the intact glass container and an old coin, as excavated at Leibnitz), 4) HVC·RE-PONI·IVSS (were reburied here by order of), 2) IMPCAES/MAXIMILIANVS·AVG (Imperator Caesar Maximilian Augustus), 5) IT·ANN·M·D·VI·XII·KLS·MAII (on 12 May AD 1506 in the Julian calendar) (Hebert 2009, 41). The inscription purposely calls Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian I ‘Imperator’, ‘Caesar’, and ‘Augustus’ in order geographically and ideologically to emphasize his connection with ancient Rome (Hebert 2009, 42).

Evocation of the past at Gamla Uppsala (Sweden)

Let’s switch to a very different scene and fast forward to early nineteenth-century Sweden. In 1834 Carl XIV Johan (1763–1844), king of Sweden and Norway visited the Iron Age burial mounds of Gamla Uppsala (also known as Old Uppsala).⁵ This site had fuelled people’s imagination for centuries. Medieval chroniclers considered it as a pre-Christian assembly place in which feasts and sacrifices were held (Svanberg 2003, 94; Ljungkvist 2008, 263; Ljungkvist et al. 2011). The visit was captured in a painting made in 1836 by Swedish artist Johan Way (1792–1873), which today is owned by the National Museum of Stockholm (Figure 16.3) (Way 1836). The painting was brought to my attention a few years ago by Leif Gren, from the Swedish National Heritage Board together with the information that the king had originally been a French marshal of bourgeois background named Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte, who had been elected the heir-presumptive to the Swedish throne in 1810 because the Swedish royal family was dying out.

The most salient characteristics in the picture are the three large mounds in the sparsely settled landscape. While the sun is just breaking through the clouds, country folk are arriving. They stand in the lower areas of the closest mound. The top of the mound is occupied

⁵ Throughout the twentieth century AD the mounds were believed to date to the Migration period (fifth and early sixth centuries AD). A recent revision of the evidence for the eastern and western mounds makes a Vendel period date (late sixth and early seventh centuries AD) more plausible (Ljungkvist 2008, 274–5).



Figure 16.3. *Carl XIV Johans besök vid Uppsala högar 1834* (Carl XIV Johan's visit at the Uppsala mounds in 1834). Painting by Johan Way, 1836. © the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, NM 4813.

by more elegantly dressed people. The ladies are carrying parasols. These approximately 160 men, women and children are watching a ceremony in reverent respect which unfolds in the foreground of the picture. A group of at least ninety men—many more are hidden from view—are arranged in a half-circle on a platform-like lower mound. The person in the centre is Carl XIV Johan (Figure 16.4a), who is dressed in a uniform with a sash and elegant riding boots. The names of thirty additional participants are known through Way's sketches (one print and fourteen drawings) that belong to the Uppsala University Library image collection (Way 1934a). In contrast to the king, these people are of Swedish descent. I will only mention the most important ones.

To the king's left stands Magnus Brahe (Figure 16.4b) who fought with then crown prince Bernadotte in the war against Napoleon from 1813–1814 and remained in high favour after Carl XIV Johan's accession to the throne. The person in uniform next to him is the governor of the Uppsala province Robert von Kraemer (Figure 16.4c).



Figure 16.4. Details from *Carl XIV Johans besök vid Uppsala högar 1834*: (a) Carl XIV Johan (AD 1763–1844) (b) Magnus Brahe (AD 1790–1844) (c) Robert von Kraemer (AD 1791–1880) (d) Carl von Rosenstein (AD 1766–1836) (e) Erik Gustaf Geijer (AD 1783–1847) (f) Gustaf Wilhelm Leuhusen (AD 1812–1909) (g) Carl Johan Tornberg (AD 1807–1877) and Carl Wilhelm Callerholm (AD 1803–1883) (h) Johan Way (AD 1792–1873) (i) two young men writing: ‘På våra förfäders gravar inför alla könungars konung svära vi Eders Majes[tät] en orubblig trohet’. © the Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, NM 4813.

The master of ceremony is the Archbishop of Uppsala, Carl von Rosenstein (Figure 16.4d) who is wearing a black cassock, a white ruff and a black cloak. Judging from his half-open mouth, only visible in profile and his raised arm he seems to be holding a speech or prayer. In contrast to the king, Rosenstein was from a noble family.⁶

⁶ He was also from a line of physicians and inscribed at Uppsala University when he was less than one year old. Later he became a member of the Royal Swedish

Between the king and the master of ceremony lies a hat on the ground which appears to belong to no one in particular.

Of the remaining people in the painting, whose identity is known, the majority are professors, lecturers and students of Uppsala University. In close proximity to the archbishop on the left we see Swedish poet and history professor at Uppsala University Erik Gustaf Geijer (Figure 16.4e). Geijer was several times rector of Uppsala University and member of the Church of Sweden clergy, a member of the Swedish Academy from 1824 and inspector of Värmlands Nation, one of Uppsala University's student unions.

The person on the opposite side, in the right part of the painting, is 22-year-old Baron Gustaf Wilhelm Leuhusen (Figure 16.4f), curator (chairman) of Stockholms Nation, another student union of Uppsala University. Directly behind Leuhusen one can see the curators of the unions Östgöta Nation (Mag. Carl Johan Tornberg), Upplands Nation (Mag. Carl Wilhelm Callerholm) (both Figure 16.4g), Smålands Nation (Kand. Pehr Niclas Ekman), and Kalmar Nation (Kand. Nils Gustaf Högländer). In the background, to Geijer's left, the painter has immortalized himself (Figure 16.4h) referring to himself as 'Professor Way' (Way 1834a). In the right foreground two young men (Figure 16.4i) are writing on paper: 'På våra förfäders gravar inför alla könungars konung svära vi Eders Majes[tät] en orubblig trohet' ('On the graves of our forefathers before the King of kings we swear Your Majesty an unwavering allegiance').⁷

What must have been obvious to everybody participating in the event, the forefathers the two young men are referring to were not the king's ancestors. Quite on the contrary, they could have been everybody else's ancestors except the king's. If the painting and its title were the only source of our information, we could interpret this as an event in the life of a foreign king trying to forge a conceptual link between himself and his country's deep history, thereby legitimizing his rule. While this interpretation has its merits, the painting tells a different story. The visit took place at an important historic turning point when scholars became the leading agents in the interpretation of the past. The rediscovery and evocation of the Old Norse past, fuelled by poetry and science, played a crucial role in Swedish

Academy of Sciences and an honorary member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities.

⁷ I would like to thank Alison Klevnäs for helping me decipher the text.

nationalism throughout the nineteenth century (Svanberg 2003). Erik Gustaf Geijer (Figure 16.4e) was Sweden's greatest proponent of Romanticism and an ardent nationalist. In 1811 he published the poem 'The Viking', which made the word 'Viking' popular and together with his later historical works on Swedish history helped to rehabilitate Norse culture among the Swedish people (Warburg 1904; Svanberg 2003, 36). In his right hand Gustaf Wilhelm Leuhusen (Figure 16.4f) holds Geijer's famous mead drinking horn (Way 1934b). This horn had been given to Geijer in 1816 by students of Värmland Nation. The silver decoration on the horn depicts the tale of the Mead of Poetry, a mythical drink from Norse mythology. Similar Viking revival mead drinking horns were popular among many students in the Romantic era.

The royal visit took place at a time when the concept of prehistory started to emerge in Scandinavia. Precisely in 1834, the Danish word for prehistory, *forhistorisk*, was printed for the first time in an article by the Dane Christian Molbech (Rowley-Conwy 2006, 106). In 1836, the year when Way finished his painting, Christian Jürgensen Thomsen published his Three-age system (Thomsen 1836). Twelve years after the royal visit, in 1846, large-scale archaeological investigations were initiated by Crown Prince Carl, later King Carl XV, and carried out by antiquarian Bror Emil Hildebrand from Lund (Sweden) (Rowley-Conwy 2006). Hildebrand dug the largest of the three mounds, the 9-metre-high eastern mound (Östhögen), driven by the wish of finding a Svea king's tomb. He had been taught the Three-age system by Thomsen in 1830 (Rowley-Conwy 2006, 108). The dead-body politics that transpired at Gamla Uppsala are part of Swedish nation-state creation. Katherine Verdery has suggested that nationalism is a form of ancestor cult with the dead occupying both space (territory) and time (genealogies) (Verdery 1999, 160). The reinterpretation of ancient monuments provided a possibility 'to anchor an evolving national mythology of identity' (Dietler 1998, 73 discussing France).

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I have presented four different cases for 'persuasive efforts' of appropriation albeit primarily focusing on mortuary

monuments: 1) that of German Roman King Rudolf I, who was buried at the place of biologically unrelated political leaders that he claimed as his ancestors; 2) of Emperor Maximilian I who wanted to be buried amongst bronze statues of real and fictive ancient ancestors and 3) who ordered the incorporation of ancient Roman burial contents into a newly constructed monument in order to forge a geographic and ideological link with ancient Rome; and finally 4) the highly politicized assembly at Gamla Uppsala in the presence of the Swedish King Carl XIV Johan promoted by scholars and student unions of Uppsala University evocating the Old Norse past in order to build national identity. All four strategies involved dead bodies, if one accepts Verdery's view that statues are dead people cast in bronze or carved in stone (Verdery 1999, 5). Although the particular histories are unique, on a more general note all four events can be interpreted as attempts of appropriation.

These cases can serve as models to interpret what happened in a more distant past, e.g. explain why former menhirs and stelae sometimes were transported over considerable distance to be incorporated into Neolithic passage tombs (see L'Helgouach 1983; Patton 1993; Cassen 2000; Holtorf 2003; García Sanjuán 2011, 84); why, during the Bronze, Iron and Middle Ages, burials and offerings were sometimes inserted into Neolithic tombs (Whitley 2002, 123; Boaventura et al. 2014); why rings of standing stones—Bradley (2010, 6) interprets them as representations of dead people—surround deposits with human remains. For prehistory we will probably never know with certainty what exactly caused these actions, but—especially with respect to standing stones—I agree with Bradley (2010, 6) that archaeologists should be prepared to speculate about the original meanings of particular structural elements. Historic examples are a rich source for explanation patterns.

Biographical approaches to monuments are a promising archaeological endeavour in order to understand the complexity of human activity across time and space. Instead of treating posterior interferences as regrettable activities hindering archaeological investigation, archaeologists have started to appreciate them as a method to unmask social processes and societal ideals. Obviously, not every monument reuse can be explained in terms of genealogical appropriation albeit the effort to appropriation is a salient characteristic in many of them. In the Middle Ages many 'heathen' menhirs were transformed into Christian wayside-shrines and in post-Medieval times—mostly in the

wake of the Counter-Reformation (c. AD 1545–1648)—dolmen graves were turned into Christian chapels. Examples are the dolmen chapels São Dinis/Anta de Pavia and Nossa Senhora do Livramento/Anta de São Brissos (both Évora district, Portugal), which were transformed in the seventeenth century AD (according to the site signs). The Chapel of the Seven Sleepers near Plouaret (Brittany, France) was erected on top of a prehistoric dolmen between AD 1702 and 1744 (e.g. Mortillet 1898, 673, figs.1–3). Today monuments are places of Neopagan veneration (Popa 2014), destination for mass-touristic ‘pilgrimages’ and object of museum display and cultural heritage management.

Holtorf (1998, 24) has already criticized the term ‘afterlife’ for denoting the life-history of monuments during later time periods. As a matter of fact, monuments continuously play a role regardless of the intentions of their original builders. Like dead bodies (Verdery 1999) and landscapes (Bender 2001), monuments are constantly ‘on the move’. They always carry a potential to become contested, worked and re-worked by people according to particular individual, social and political circumstances. Monuments are usually claimed by someone, they are always somebody’s property. From the perspective of a *longue durée*, alteration and reuse of monuments, and persuasive efforts to possess them are ongoing processes. As variable as these strategies are, the past is under constant attack by the present.

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Piecing Together a Past

Richard Bradley

INTRODUCTION: ONE PAST OR MANY PASTS?

Piecing Together the Past was one of the last books by Gordon Childe. It was published in 1955 and drew on a series of lectures he had given over the previous decade. Every chapter asked a question. The most difficult was: 'What happened in prehistory?' There might be disagreements over particular answers, but they would be based on a single method of analysis, for it seemed as if there was only one past to study.

The authors of the present volume take a different view, for, no matter which monuments they consider, they find evidence of many separate pasts. Some of those histories were invoked at different times, and others were advocated simultaneously but by different groups of people. There was far more diversity than Childe allowed. It may have happened because his account was concerned exclusively with prehistory and with its significance for twentieth-century thought. What took place in between was overlooked, for in 1955 few scholars envisaged a past within the past. Those who did so were more concerned with the development of archaeology as a discipline. Childe's procedure was like that of field projects which disregard later structures to focus on a single period.

Childe was concerned with artefacts as well as monuments, but the present account considers the evidence of buildings and related structures. It is a vital distinction. Small objects might have been discovered by chance or could have circulated for a long time as heirlooms. Monuments, however, were impossible to overlook. They might be

ignored as unacceptable beliefs were rejected, they might even be destroyed, but in every case their presence demanded some response.

It is conventional to associate monuments with memory, as that invokes the Latin verb *monere*, to remind. This equation is problematical. It is implausible that a single version of the past would remain unaltered for long and more likely that it was revised as circumstances changed. At the same time, forgetting is an important cultural process (Forty and Küchler 1999) and ideas could lose their force surprisingly quickly. At that stage they might be disregarded, or they were reinvented on the basis of partial information.

COMMEMORATING THE FUTURE

It is worth considering a modern example and the problems it presents. The National Memorial Arboretum is in the English Midlands. It contains a whole series of installations commemorating specific communities, events, victories, defeats, and disasters. Some of the memorials involve the display of relics, but others do not (Williams 2014). The Arboretum is expressly dedicated to peace as well as war, but many of the individual components celebrate the armed forces. In fact there is no single 'national' memorial. Instead, a wide variety of different groups commemorate past people or events of special significance to themselves. It would be impossible to compose a single narrative out of these separate elements, for quite different pasts are being remembered.

The site has another feature that is even more relevant here. At the time I was writing this chapter, the media reported the inauguration of a naval monument on the site. The organizers announced:

the dedication and unveiling of the National Services Memorial to those who served, serve today *and will serve tomorrow* regardless of rank, trade or fighting arm.

(my emphasis; <<http://www.themma.org.uk/events/events-calendar/calendar-of-events/service-didicati>>)

Its very existence poses an intriguing question. If it is difficult to commemorate a single past, how is it possible to erect a memorial to the participants in conflicts that have not yet taken place?

Put in this way, the proposition seems absurd, yet something similar is the premise of many interpretations in archaeology. If monuments were constructed to enshrine a particular view of the world, it seems reasonable to imagine that those ideas were meant to last. Their expression in such a durable form appears to protect them from challenge. At the same time, the results of fieldwork show that many monuments decayed or were abandoned. Others were modified by later generations. It is unlikely that the ideas associated with them were immune from a similar process. The challenge is to establish when connections with the original concept were lost. This could happen even though people believed they were adhering to traditional norms.

IMPROVISATION AND THE LIMITS OF MEMORY: THE RELEVANCE OF ORAL LITERATURE

A useful comparison is with oral literature whose contents are normally studied at the point when they were written down. At the same time, there are accounts of how they were composed and the methods by which they were transmitted. These issues were raised in Milman Parry's studies of epic poems in the Balkans (Parry 1987; Lord 1960). He showed how the contents of oral performances could change from one occasion to another, despite an explicit intention to respect the traditional elements. The text was never stable and altered even more drastically over a period of decades.

How long did it take before the original elements were lost? One way of finding out is to compare the oldest written texts with archaeological evidence. To what extent do they present a consistent picture? How long did that remain the case? It is difficult to say. When oral literature was first committed to writing its contents were fixed, but they were also changed. That applies not only to the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*, but also to the earliest Irish literature and the Icelandic sagas which are the main source of information on Old Norse religion. In all three cases they were written down in a Christian context, and to some extent their meanings must have been altered in the process. How far do those texts offer a persuasive account of the past? Do the identifiable elements in the Ulster Cycle relate to the

Iron Age, or was their history much shorter? In a recent book (2013) Anders Andrén suggests that the world described in the Norse sagas shares some features with the cosmology of the Bronze Age, but he also considers when other elements were dropped.

The same question has been considered in Classical archaeology. Influenced by the research of Lord (1960) and Parry (1987), literary scholars have studied the epics attributed to Homer. Were the texts of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* originally oral poems, performed (and presumably modified) before they were committed to writing? When did that happen, and what was the impetus to preserve these ancient narratives? Again there is no consensus beyond an impression that they refer to practices and beliefs which were current many centuries before (Morris 1986).

The time interval is important. The texts of Homer and *Beowulf* provide more insights into the past than Irish epics, and Norse sagas offer still less information on the Scandinavian Bronze Age. When traditional stories were performed over a few centuries, it is obvious that their contents changed. That even applies to points of detail. The *Iliad*, the *Odyssey* and *Beowulf* may preserve information about a more ancient world. They include social practices, mortuary rituals, warfare, and beliefs about the supernatural. *Beowulf* describes Anglo-Saxon architecture and material culture, and the texts of Homer refer to significant places by name. All these elements are reflected in the archaeological record. It is not certain when these narratives were composed, and specialists do not agree when they were written down, but the entire process may have taken 300 to 500 years. For Kristiansen and Larsson (2005), Homer provides such important information that a chapter in their book *The Rise of Bronze Age Society* is called 'Odysseus: A Bronze Age Archetype'.

Early Irish texts such as the *Táin* raise other problems. Like *Beowulf*, they were recorded in the Christian era, but they refer to ideas that might have been much older. In his recent book John Waddell (2014) identifies several themes that seem to refer to the prehistoric period. They include sacred kingship, a goddess of sovereignty, the Otherworld, and a solar cosmology. These elements were associated with particular places in the Irish landscape. It is intriguing that three of them—Tara, Navan Fort, and Knockaulin—have been excavated and are associated with monuments that date from the Iron Age. In contrast to those described in the Anglo-Saxon poem *Beowulf*, the buildings mentioned in these sources bear little resemblance

to the structures documented by archaeology. Indeed, where portable artefacts are described in enough detail to be identified, they resemble the material culture of the Viking period (Mallory 1992). It seems as if knowledge of social institutions and the cosmos was more resilient than other elements.

The same idea applies to Andrén's study *Tracing Old Norse Cosmology* (2013) which considers the persistence of certain ideas from the Nordic Bronze Age to the time of the Icelandic sagas. Here the connections are still more tenuous, but they are of the same character as those suggested by Waddell. The most significant were the existence of a three-tier cosmos and the movement of the sun across the sky. The argument is tentative but entirely plausible. It raises the same question as the other texts. If oral epics told stories that were meant to remain unchanged, how soon did they diverge from their original models?

The claims made by Waddell and Andrén will be controversial, because such lengthy periods of time are involved between the currency of certain ideas and the periods when traditional texts were written down (Table 17.1). In the case of *Beowulf* it was a few centuries, but it could have been longer for the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. On the other hand, they share the common feature that some of the elements they describe conform quite closely to the evidence recovered by archaeology. On the other hand, the equivalent interval might have been a millennium in Ireland, and twice as long in

Table 17.1. The traditional elements that may have been retained when oral literature was first written down, compared with recent estimates of the time intervals between their original currency and their appearance in these texts.

Time interval	500 years?	1,000 years?	Over 2,000 years
Texts	<i>Beowulf</i> <i>The Iliad</i> <i>The Odyssey</i>	The Ulster Cycle	Icelandic sagas
Elements possibly retained	Social practices Social institutions Mortuary rituals Concepts of the supernatural Significant places Architecture Material culture	Concepts of the supernatural Cosmology Social institutions Significant places	Cosmology

northern Europe. Here the connections are far more general ones and do not draw on the details of these narratives. Instead they concern social and religious institutions or beliefs about the cosmos. Is that because accounts of the past retained some elements for a few centuries, while more of their contents were lost over a thousand years? One possibility is that ideas that explained natural features, like caves or the passage of the sun, might have been particularly resilient.

MONUMENTS, MEMENTOS, AND MEMORIALS

This comparison has other implications. When did people record the contents of epic poems? The question was discussed by Ian Morris (1986) in his article 'The Use and Abuse of Homer'. He considered the distinctive character of oral literature and the difficulty of using it as a historical source. He also investigated the context in which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were written down. It was done in order to establish the legitimacy of a new political system and to relate it to a largely mythical past. It is no accident that the contents of these poems were recorded at about the same time as the development of the *polis*.

A similar argument applies to the creation of monuments. In an influential paper that was also concerned with the Mediterranean, John Cherry (1978) argued that public buildings were often constructed to celebrate political structures during their formative phase. One of their roles was to reinforce the new order. They were also built to emphasize traditional norms at a time when those ideas were threatened. His argument can be extended to public buildings in northern and western Europe.

It is likely that such monuments were among the places where oral poetry was performed. Did their significance change at the same pace, or might the sheer mass of ancient architecture have protected the ideas it expressed? Whatever the solution, the assumption that these constructions created the memories of the future has little in its favour. For exactly the same reasons there are limits to the extent to which people retained memories of the distant past.

A welcome feature of this book is that it is not about how the past was *remembered* but about *how it was used*. In his account of the prehistoric monuments at Avebury, David Wheatley uses the term memento to describe things surviving from antiquity that required

an explanation. This is useful. It is difficult to infer the workings of memory in a society with no written sources. On the other hand, the presence of features inherited from antiquity necessarily posed a question.

What did people do when they were confronted by phenomena originating in the past? What challenges did they face, and were certain observations more likely to draw a response than other ones? If so, why did it happen? There are problems of interpretation. Were certain features commonly misunderstood? Confronted by the remains of prehistoric monuments, how did later generations piece together a past? The contributors have much to say on these subjects. The following section highlights a few of these issues and introduces some more examples.

PROCESSES, EVENTS, AND INTERPRETATIONS

There is an important distinction between the reuse of older monuments in response to specific events, and processes that extended for a longer period of time. Both are represented among these studies.

Perhaps the clearest example of a protracted process is the selection of megalithic tombs as the sites for later burials. It is clear that this was discontinuous, as the placing of these graves can be at odds with the organization of the primary deposits. Nor were individual structures reused at the same time as one another. Instead there seems to have been a more general conception that these were the right kinds of place to associate with the dead. This is clearly demonstrated in Iberia, and the same is true in other regions. For instance, it applies to Bell Beaker activity at chambered tombs in Atlantic Europe and to a renewed interest in these monuments in Ireland during the pre-Roman and Roman Iron Ages. Similarly, the royal sites of Early Medieval Ireland incorporated the remains of older structures, but in this case the process was even more extended. The Hill of Tara, the legendary seat of the Irish High Kings, contained a Neolithic passage tomb and a series of Bronze Age burial mounds as well as the Iron Age monuments for which the site is famous (Newman 1997). In later periods these monuments were identified with the people and events that featured in oral literature. That process gave rise to a specialized literary genre known as *dinnseanchas* which was concerned with the

interpretation of traditional place-names and the monuments to which they referred.

Such developments contrast with the situation in the south of Brittany, where a stimulus for reusing megaliths could have been a famous sea battle. It is possible that an altar associated with a reused Neolithic tomb commemorated a Roman general whose career is known from historical sources. Something similar applies to the abandonment of the great stone ship at Jelling, its replacement by new constructions, and the ransacking of a royal grave. Again the historical context is clear. Just as the altar found at Le Petit Mont carries an inscription, the transformation of Jelling is commemorated by a rune-stone.

If it is easy to distinguish between long sequences and sudden changes, it is more difficult to work out why they happened.

ESTABLISHING LEGITIMACY

Ian Morris (1986) argued that the Homeric epics were committed to writing as part of the political changes taking place in Greece at the time. The past endowed these developments with greater authority, for the poems referred to the lives of heroes and gods. The same argument applies to the reuse of certain monuments, and again its factual basis was tenuous.

A good example is seen in Asturias where megalithic monuments were brought back into commission when churches were constructed on top of them during the first millennium AD. It happened in a well-documented historical context and this may be another case in which important changes were given an appearance of stability because they were connected with monuments built in the past. The same practice is even more apparent in the case of personal memorials. In the Iberian peninsula some of them carried inscriptions. Whether or not they could be read, what is particularly striking is how they were used a second time and how new texts could be added to those that were already there. This might be a case in which later populations were claiming descent from the people buried at the same sites. Were they contriving a genealogy? It is not unlike the genealogies claimed by Anglo-Saxon kings, whose ancestors supposedly included Classical gods, Norse deities and figures from the Bible (Sisam 1990).

COEXISTENCE AND CONFRONTATION

It is often forgotten that almost any setting will contain structures that originated at different times. Few urban or rural landscapes were created as a single act, and not all their components survived (Olivier 2008). There are cases in which the relationships between features with different histories must have been significant. Obvious examples include the concentrations of Bronze Age burials around the Neolithic centres at Avebury and Stonehenge. Their construction may have involved direct cross references between monuments that were built during separate periods. As a result, structures with their own histories coexisted in the same location.

What happened when those features took similar forms? That question is addressed in a fascinating account of Breton menhirs. Were some Neolithic examples destroyed during the Iron Age, or were they copied or recarved? In this case it seems likely that both groups remained in use together. Although they had been located according to different criteria, it may be that earlier examples were endowed with a new importance during later prehistory. It happened at a time when fresh examples were made, but the fact that they might have been used together raises a methodological problem. If a Neolithic standing stone was significant in the first millennium BC, does that turn it into an Iron Age monument? It is a reasonable argument. The Neolithic chambered tombs of the Morbihan were changed into Roman monuments when artefacts of that date were buried there. Similarly, Copper Age monoliths in the southern Alps were transformed in the fourth century AD. Francesco Fedele interprets this as 'a ceremony [...] of reappraisal and reconsacration'. It is an apt way of characterizing this relationship.

Confrontation was a commoner practice and is illustrated by several contributions to the book. It could form part of a longer process, or it could have been a sudden event, but in either case monuments and visual images associated with a new system of belief were superimposed on those surviving from a more ancient past. Existing features were frequently destroyed. The process is best illustrated by a rune-stone at Jelling that confronts traditional 'pagan' beliefs with those of a different religion and a new political order.

Throughout the Iberian peninsula this process is illustrated by the addition of Christian symbols to prehistoric chambered tombs, petroglyphs and paintings. This example is particularly informative as it is

also illustrated by place-names. Decorated outcrops, caves and rock shelters were commonly associated with the Moors (Alves 2001). None of those images was made during the Islamic occupation—this was an interpretation that contrasted ‘paganism’ with Christian belief. Symbols representing the cross and the Mass were superimposed on the designs that were already present, and in certain cases existing designs were altered so that they were consistent with the teachings of the church (Alves, Bradley, and Fábregas 2013).

ASSUMPTIONS AND ERRORS

The idea that Iberian rock art was used by Moors was simply an interpretation. The reuse of the same locations was an attempt to counter that influence. There are other ways in which the reuse of the past could be based on a false premise. If prehistoric paintings and carvings in Spain and Portugal demanded a response from Christians, those in Britain and Ireland were almost entirely ignored. That was because of another unwarranted assumption, for these designs are entirely non-figurative and until the nineteenth century AD were considered as geological features. In contrast to the situation in Iberia Christian motifs were rarely added to these sites because no one was aware of their original significance. For the same reason few decorated rocks in the British Isles were given names. There are other cases in which people were confused by the elements associated with the past. A particular problem was presented by purely geological features such as springs, caves or rock outcrops, especially when they were associated with finds of ancient artefacts. Another example of this confusion comes from Medieval Serbia where human bones of prehistoric date may have been treated as Christian relics.

The case-studies presented here include several examples of unwarranted interpretations. For example, the chambered tombs of southern Brittany that contained such distinctive Roman artefacts were not unique in that region (Galliou 1987). Very similar finds come from two other contexts: caves and the subterranean cellars (souterrains) found in Iron Age settlements. On one level all these features were openings in the earth, and it may be for this reason they were suitable for offerings. Another possibility is that people in the

Roman period were unable to tell these features apart. They did not adhere to the contemporary distinction between culture and nature because geology did not develop as a discipline until the Enlightenment. At the same time, souterrains and chambered tombs were both accepted as antiquities, but in the past there would be no way of telling that they were built at different times.

The same problem can be recognized in the archaeology of later periods. Until recently it was assumed that the enormous mound at Jelling covered a Bronze Age monument—it was another example that had been reused. It was a reasonable assumption, but this interpretation was not correct. On the other hand, the people who constructed the mound would have been aware of older barrows in the surrounding landscape and these structures may have provided a source of inspiration. So great was the resemblance between such earthworks that, following the excavation of similar monuments at Old Uppsala, the earthwork known as King Bjorn's tumulus was investigated. Against all expectation it dated from the Bronze Age.

Howard Williams suggests that the text of *Beowulf* reveals a similar confusion. The dragon's lair is usually identified as a Neolithic tomb, for there were many of these structures in the region where the poem was set. He is right to say that in some respects the description of this monument recalls Roman architecture. He also compares it with the crypts beneath Saxon churches. As the poem changed along with its audience, the contents may have been revised. That is particularly important as the story took place in south Scandinavia but was committed to writing in England. In its original context the obvious model would be a passage grave, for Roman prototypes were absent, but chambered tombs of this kind were very rare in the part of England in which the poem was written down. Here it would be more appropriate to compare it with the structures associated with Christian buildings. It was part of the process by which a 'pagan' epic was transformed.

THE PERSISTENCE OF THE HUMAN FORM

There is less scope for misinterpretation where ancient features portray the human body. Several of the contributors discuss statues, steles or menhirs which must have played at least two distinct roles in

the past. The obvious one is as memorials to people who had died, but it is likely that others were treated as living beings. Sometimes they possessed agency and demanded continued devotion (Gell 1998, ch. 7; Meskell 2004).

That may be why they were treated in such distinctive ways. They could be raised and later destroyed, their positions could be changed, or new statues might be erected alongside older ones. Their shapes and decoration might be modified over the course of time, and often they were defaced or destroyed. In many respects they followed a similar trajectory to other kinds of monument, but in this case the evidence is particularly direct and easy to recognize. There were several important processes. Individual statues could be altered as the generations changed, so that their original references might be qualified or cancelled. Groups of statues might be supplemented or rearranged as the development of a particular site traced the history of a community. They could also be claimed by later groups and identified as ancestral figures, so that their pasts were entirely reworked. Alternatively, they might be taken down and incorporated in new kinds of building. All these developments have been identified in the archaeology of the Alps, the Mediterranean and Atlantic Europe. The only difference between the treatment of human images and that of other features is that the modification of ancient statues leaves more obvious traces than the other processes considered in the book. It is also possible that depictions of the human form were treated with more circumspection than the monuments where many of them are found.

SCOTTISH STONE CIRCLES—A SUCCESSION OF DIFFERENT PASTS

Statues and monuments had complex histories and their treatment shares certain features in common. The evidence is so diverse that it can easily become confusing. In ending this chapter it may be helpful to return to some of these themes in relation to a single region and only one kind of monument. It was a kind of structure with at least four different pasts (Bradley and Nimura forthcoming).

The past in 2000 BC

The monuments in question are in the north and north-east of Scotland, and in their initial form they date from the late third and early second millennia BC. They share some important features. They enclose cairns and in a few cases were associated with unburnt human remains. The monoliths in the circle were graded by height so that the lowest were towards the north-east and the tallest at the south-west; a few surrounded chambered tombs whose entrance passage shared the same orientation. Those at Balnuaran of Clava were aligned on the midwinter sunset. Excavation shows that the standing stones were erected as use of the interior was coming to an end and in some cases two particularly tall pillars flank a large recumbent stone, giving the impression of a blocked entrance. One possibility is that these places were associated with the dead and directed towards the setting sun and the onset of darkness (Welfare 2011, ch. 7).

If that interpretation is correct, it would mean that from the first erection of the standing stones those monuments were no longer used, but nothing could be further from the truth. There were at least three phases in which they were brought back into commission after intervals of about 500–1,200 years, 2,100 and 2,600 years respectively. All referred explicitly to the past significance of these monuments, but they did so for different reasons and in very different ways.

The past in 1500–800 BC

The original structures remained undisturbed for many years, during which there is little evidence of human activity at most of the monuments, but between about 1500 and 800 BC they assumed a new significance. The cairns inside them were employed as cemeteries or cremation pyres. This happened at almost every site excavated in modern times and is clearly documented by radiocarbon dates on the bones found in older projects. Stone circles were reused at a time when the landscape was changing and permanent settlements were becoming established for the first time. These new developments may have gained authority by reference to the past.

Still more striking, new circles were built which were similar in size to the roundhouses of this period; in a sense they were their mirror image. The communities who built them were well aware of the requirements of traditional architecture, for they copied several

elements that could still be identified among the buildings of the past. Thus the monoliths rose in height towards one side of the structure; they showed the same emphasis on the dark side of the sky; and they maintained the association with the dead, although now the emphasis was exclusively on cremation burials. This may be a case in which an ancient cosmology still retained its power.

The past in AD 100

With only a few exceptions, these structures seem to have been abandoned between about 800 BC and the early first millennium AD. By then the north of Scotland was not far outside the Roman Empire and subject to military incursions across the frontier (Hunter 2001). It was at this stage that stone circles and related monuments assumed a different significance. A few examples were chosen as appropriate places for burials. This is remarkable since graves of that date are comparatively rare. What is especially striking is that some of the objects associated with the dead referred to the Roman world. There were imported artefacts, and references to unfamiliar practices like the three gaming sets found in a cemetery beside a stone circle at Waulkmill. The people who reused these sites selected a form of monument which was closely associated with this region. On one recently excavated site the link was especially obvious. Here large flakes detached from the standing stones were distributed through the fillings of two graves. These burials were located on the perimeter of the prehistoric monument, but there was another at its centre.

It is possible to say something about the local context of this development. These burials were well outside the Roman province of Britannia, yet some of the objects buried there referred to the world beyond the frontier. At the same time they were deposited at ancient monuments of a peculiarly local character. This was a time when some communities were constructing enormous roundhouses. These buildings were associated with subterranean cellars, but a distinctive feature of such structures is that they incorporated pieces of decorated stone of the kind associated with the earliest use of stone circles. It seems as if the new developments acknowledged the power of the past.

How were stone circles understood during the Roman Iron Age of north-east Scotland? They seem to have provided a symbol of resistance and regional identity, so that even communities who emulated

foreign practices and acquired imported artefacts took care to bury those objects at monuments which were at least two millennia old. Stone circles might still have been associated with the dead, but the past was also employed to assert local independence.

The past in AD 600

That development became even more obvious after the Roman army left Britain. The inhabitants of northern and eastern Scotland appear in historical accounts as the Picts. Until recently little was known about their cemeteries or settlements, but they were famous for free-standing sculptures which are widely distributed in the landscape. The earliest 'symbol stones' feature a series of enigmatic designs shared with the metalwork of the period (Henderson and Henderson 2003). They seem to be associated with an otherwise undocumented system of belief. In a second phase the same motifs were retained, but now they appeared on only one side of the decorated stone, while Christian images, including the cross and scenes from the Bible, were depicted on the reverse. In the end all the designs referred to the new religion. The confrontation between two views of the world was played out over several hundred years.

The reuse of stone circles and allied monuments played a part in this process. Occasionally Pictish designs were added to these monuments, but more often they were created in their vicinity. Hoards of decorated silver were deposited on the sites of two Early Bronze Age monuments—one of them a small stone circle—and a series of standing stones of prehistoric character were embellished during the Early Medieval period. Why did this happen?

The history of the symbol stones provides a vital clue, for they appear to document the interplay between traditional beliefs and Christianity. The first examples make no reference to the new religion, but during the course of the sequence it became the dominant element. David Clarke (2007) has argued that the earliest of these sculptures were associated with ancient monuments of a peculiarly local type and that they occur most frequently in areas where the work of missionaries was resisted. Here Christianity was slower to take hold, and one reason why this happened was a new concern with the past. Places that had once been important were invested with a fresh significance as people rejected the new religion.

CONCLUSION—PIECES OF A PAST

This example draws on some of the ideas suggested by studies in this book. It also reflects the processes shared between monumental architecture and oral literature.

The lapse of time between the primary and secondary use of particular monuments is especially important. In the case of the stone circles discussed in this chapter, the first interval amounted to between 500 and 1,200 years. Certain elements were retained or copied when these sites were reused: their orientations, their concern with the setting sun, and their association with the dead. It is not clear whether it happened because cosmologies were especially resilient, but the interval is similar to that between the Irish Iron Age and the earliest texts of the Ulster Cycle.

By the Roman Iron Age the time interval had increased to about 2,100 years. These monuments were used again, but by now the only connection with past practice was their association with the dead. Again the evidence is ambiguous, but it is much less likely that it resulted from an unbroken tradition. On the other hand, stone circles and related monuments were of considerable antiquity and could be treated as symbols of local identity. In that way the remains of a distant past could express resistance to Rome. Even that evidence is ambiguous, as the people who reused these monuments emulated foreign practices. What is clear is that they kept their distance from their neighbours across the frontier, and that may be why their settlements incorporated stones that had originally been decorated in the Neolithic or Early Bronze Age periods.

Something similar applies to the Pictish use of stone circles. There is only limited evidence that these sites were associated with the dead, and it seems likely that their main importance was in asserting the power of the past in relation to the influence of a new religion. There is nothing to suggest that the forms or orientations of ancient buildings were any longer significant, and by now it may have been the individual stones—whether or not they formed parts of larger settings—that became the focus of attention. The images that were carved there trace a distinctive history. At first they documented local resistance to Christian beliefs. There followed a period of confrontation and coexistence, before the influence of these ancient monuments was at an end.

To summarize, the character of these places changed as knowledge of their original significance was lost. A similar process is illustrated by the development of oral literature. Of course, this comparison cannot be taken too far. Architecture and epic poetry were very different media, yet both of them referred to a past that never stayed the same.

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